



CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

BY THE REV.

W. M. CLOW, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND CHRISTIAN ETHICS

UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW

AUTHOR OF "THE CROSS IN CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE" AND
"THE DAY OF THE CROSS"

ETC.



CINCINNATI:
JENNINGS AND GRAHAM
NEW YORK:
EATON AND MAINS

~~LOS ANGELES~~
THE MASTER'S COLLEGE
POWELL LIBRARY
SANTA CLARITA, CA 91321

PREFACE

THIS book is an endeavour to set the sources and issues of our social unrest in the light of the ethics of Christ. The current statements of its various problems, and the demands made by the discontented are examined and estimated. Opposing ideals of social order and new methods of reform are passed in review. The need of this is evident. The plague spots of our industrial system are a burden on the heart and conscience of all earnest-minded men. But there is a confusion and bewilderment of mind both as to their causes and their remedies. A sympathetic diagnosis and an analysis of the prescriptions which are confidently recommended, are attempted here.

A constant watchfulness has been maintained against entering into the sphere either of economics or politics. It has not been difficult to refrain from political reference or suggestion. But now and again the economic aspect of our social unrest is involved in its ethical criticism. Yet statistics have been sparingly stated, and they have been used only to confirm some ethical position. In ethics a single wrong is as wrong as a thousand.

It is only when the thousand make the wrong more evident and more urgent, or when they affect the solution, that there is a reference to "the arithmetic of woe."

To those who deny the imperative of the ethics of Christ this book has no certain message. These must be few within Christendom. Yet whether men admit the claims of Christ, or not, there is no other ethics possible in our social order. Any careful reader of that literature which revolts even at Christ's name, can see that it is His teaching which is the leaven of its thought, although it sometimes ferments with a passion alien to the mind of Christ. To these also, therefore, this book hopes to appeal.

The one purpose behind its writing is the desire to make known the will of Christ, in whose obedience there is rest.

Glasgow, 1913.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL UNREST

Social Unrest a disorder of society—Its age-long prevalence—	PAGE
The causes of its modern accentuation—Its three present-day problems—The new social atmosphere and the new power behind the demands—The passion of pity—The power of the electorate	1

CHAPTER II

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS—INDIVIDUALISM TO COLLECTIVISM

Methods of reform—The various agencies at work on the problems and their comparative failure—The need for larger solutions—Individualism, absolute and controlled—The criticism of its failure—Communism and its historical condemnation—Collectivism, old and new—An unproved and unjustified theory of Social Order	22
--	-----------

viii CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

CHAPTER III

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS—EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM AND BEYOND

	PAGE
The modern advance on an impossible Collectivism—The goal, the aim, and the method of Evolutionary Socialism—Its criticism of and protest against other theories—Its attack on Syndicalism—Its requirement of an unjustifiable regimentation—Its inability to meet the complex forms of a civilised life—Its inadequate motives—Its earthiness—Its incorrect draft of human nature—The woman and the priest—The need of regeneration—The path beyond	48

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL IDEAL OF JESUS

The discrepancy between our social condition and the Christian ideal—The interpretation of the mind of Christ—Not a systematic teacher—Modern conditions not within His survey—Christ's teaching to be understood in relation to His supreme purpose—His succession to the Hebrew social ideal—Christ's name for the social ideal, the kingdom of God—Its individualism—Its equality under law—Its religious sanction—The rule and realm of God in the heart and life—Its first regard is the man, not the State—Its chief concern is character, not condition—Its order is, first, the spiritual, then the temporal—Its ultimate appearing	70
---	----

CONTENTS

ix

CHAPTER V

THE POSSESSION OF WEALTH

PAGE

It takes a soul to move a body—The justification of wealth— The attitude and teaching of Christ—His poverty—His friendships with the rich—His dealing with them—The sayings of Jesus regarding riches—The two-fold strain of teaching in the New Testament—Wealth shown to be a Christian state—Wealth as a stewardship—Wealth as an achievement—Wealth as a peril	93
--	----

CHAPTER VI

THE SOURCES OF POVERTY

The problem of poverty distinct from the problem of labour— What is poverty?—The statistics of poverty and the classification of the poor—Primary poverty—Secondary poverty—Tertiary poverty—The specific sources of poverty—Drinking and drunkenness—Improvvidence and waste and gambling—The ethics of thrift—Sloth—In- competence—Misfortune—The victims of our industrial system—The necessity of dealing with the sources.	118
--	-----

x CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

CHAPTER VII

THE OBLIGATIONS OF CAPITAL

	PAGE
Wealth and capital distinguished from each other—Christ's attitude to capital—The direct and the indirect references to the problem in the New Testament—No ban on capitalism—The inevitable capitalist—The obligation of service—The obligation of the solicitous and generous oversight of labour—The obligation of sacrifice in times of need—The effects of the fulfilment of these obligations—On the labourer—On the social atmosphere—On the possessor of wealth	144

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEMANDS OF LABOUR

A living wage—The minimum wage—An interest in the work—Ampler leisure—The compulsory distribution of wealth and income—The suggested adaptations of our present industrial order—Trades Unions—Parliamentary interferences—Pensions, National Insurance, and the Socialism of the Death Duties Act—Co-operation—Profit-sharing—Co-partnership between capital and labour—The trend of opinion to an ethical taxation—The increase of wealth—The four sources of the stream—The ethical justification of the demands of labour	169
---	------------

CONTENTS

xi

CHAPTER IX

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

	PAGE
The undiscerned and undiscussed problem—Its imminence in political life—Land, the first necessity of well-being—Its natural state and its enriched condition—The need of distinctive laws—Hebrew Land Tenure—Its modification in the time of Christ—Land considered as a trust—Its imperative of appropriate use—Its ultimate purpose, the well-being of the people—The broad facts and the causes of rural depopulation—The land problem in the towns and industrial centres—The moral elements in the creation of the slums—Land nationalisation—The extinction of ownership by taxation—The assault on heritage—Security of tenure and of reward—Civic duty and enterprise .	195

CHAPTER X

THE REVOLT OF WOMAN

The variety of the demands—The permanence of the old ideal of woman's life—The area of the modern revolt—The Christian condemnation of the modern basis—The Christian ideal of the family—The Christian conception of marriage—An examination of the modern denials—"Leasehold marriages"—Divorce—The economic independence of women—The claim for a direct share in political life—The pleas for and against woman's suffrage—The present state of the question—The paramount consideration in this problem—The mother and the child . . .	222
--	-----

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL REFORMS

	PAGE
The Church cannot stand aloof—Different ideals of its duty—	
What are the functions of the Church ?—Its first line of	
duty—Its proclamation and enforcement of the Christian	
ethic—Its distinctive methods—Religious revival, the	
forerunner of social reforms—The duty of the individual	
Christian—The province of the Church courts—The office	
of the Christian minister—The working classes and the	
Church	254

CHAPTER XII

THE UNCONSIDERED HORIZON

The arena and its absorbed combatants—The features of the	
unregarded future—Higher education and its results—	
The increase of scientific knowledge and the mastery of	
the tools—The exhaustion of the resources of nature in	
the older industrial centres—The geographical changes—	
The less virile people—The whole world as the coming	
labour-market—The "Black Peril" and the "Yellow	
Peril"—The passing of our present problems—The only	
way—Christ in the social order	278

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL UNREST

SOCIAL unrest is manifested in a discontent with the conditions of life. Its most emphatic form to-day is the protest of the masses with the terms of their labour and its reward. It prevails among all who are wage-earners with a precarious tenure of employment, and a wage insufficient to give economic independence. It is most marked among manual labourers. Its most urgent features are a protest against the present distribution of wealth and income, and an urgent demand for a larger share in the profits of industry. It has issued, in some quarters, in a zealous propagandism against the present economic order.

Social unrest, when rightly regarded, is a disorder or disease of society. These chief features, which we have named, are merely symptoms of something wrong somewhere in our social life. That something wrong may be in the employer, or in the conditions of labour, or in the laws of the land. It may be, as must not be forgotten, in the worker himself. Or it may be in the ideal of society. In all likelihood it is due to the co-operation of

2 CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

all these causes. But it is imperative to keep in mind that the something wrong, of which the outbreaks of social unrest are only symptoms, is not any single isolated evil. Much of the confusion in thought, and most of the crude methods of healing the disorder, are due to the fact that men fix their minds on some one cause, make extreme statements about its prevalence and its effects, and ignore other contributing evils. We can be sure that no real or lasting settlement of social unrest can be reached until all its causes have been discerned, and some clear view of their comparative contributions to the disorder is seized and held.

Social unrest is not a new thing in the world. It is endemic to society, That is to say, that it is a disease to which society is always susceptible, and from which it is seldom completely free. Like other endemic diseases it may become epidemic. It may run through the people like an infection, break out in periods of virulence, and seize upon many persons usually immune from it. That is the state of the case to-day. It is manifesting itself in all the spheres of human activity. It is finding voices to speak for it in journalism and in literature, from the platform and from the pulpit. It is troubling all the parties in the State. It is forcing itself on the attention of the most unobservant and the morally heedless.

THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL UNREST 3

It has become a fever in the mental blood of large numbers of men and women who can think and speak, with deep interest, of nothing else.

This unrest of the discontented is as old as human history. We are familiar with its complaint and cry during the bondage in Egypt in the time of Moses. It has been given vivid expression in the books of the Hebrew prophets, whose writings are the treasure-house of all who quote from Scripture. It found a calm and convinced discussion in the Greek thinkers who heard the fierce demands of the "Have Nots" from the "Haves." Plato was moved by its urgency to write *The Republic*, where he sets down his belief that the settlement of social unrest is possible only to authority clothed with power. His solution is that of an intellectual aristocracy of guardians keeping an unthinking democracy in its place. Social unrest has made itself felt in every century. The crises of our social history, apart from our own purely political progress, have been reached during the epidemics of social discontent. We are passing to-day through a new and more acute phase of the disorder, and all sincere minds are willing to know what should be thought about it, and to consider every suggested remedy.

Let me begin by setting down its problems and the manner of their emergence. We shall first

4 CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

consider the reason for the continued unsettlement of this age-long unrest. Then we shall pass on to a statement of the causes which have intensified the unrest of our time. Lastly, we shall consider the form in which the problems are presenting themselves.

I

When we ask why social unrest has continued through all the centuries without finding a settlement, there are four answers. One is that it broke out in earlier times in violent rebellion, and therefore was ruthlessly suppressed. History teaches unfalteringly that social unrest is never healed by violence. Revolution may clear the ground. It never builds. It leaves no constructive mark on the social order. If we take up English history and look at the outbreak of Wat Tyler in 1381, during the starvation period after the Black Death, or if we consider the rebellion of Jack Cade in 1540, after a century of exhausting wars, or if we examine the social ferment which coincided with the Commonwealth, we shall be convinced that no settled order of society is brought about by violence. "All they who take the sword shall perish with the sword" is the unbreakable law. The same truth is evident in the issues of the Anabaptist Rising in Germany after the Reformation. It is seen more dramatically in the

results of the French Revolution. It has been made evident in the consequences of the Paris Commune of more recent date. All attempts to reduce social inequality by force are fore-doomed to failure. The strong hand of the law is raised in self-defence. It puts down these outbreaks with the strength of its disciplined power, and social problems remain unsolved. Violence not only terrifies authority, but it rouses the high temper of all in power. It alienates those who are well disposed to reform. It destroys the materials out of which a stable society can be built. It cuts the roots of wealth, and leaves the discontented in a worse condition than they were before. No division of property, and no adjustment of the rewards of labour are possible until two conditions have been fulfilled. One of these is that the larger number of the people have been brought to desire them. The other is that the prosperous, who are in authority and are usually the stronger-brained and the stronger-willed, are prepared to acquiesce. Force is no remedy.

The second answer is that social unrest has been allayed from time to time by the many attempts to realise Utopias. As early as the days of Pythagoras and right down the centuries to William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, or Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, the hopeful dreamers of all ages have seen those visions which have received their

most famous and most appealing presentation in the social scheme presented in the Utopia of Sir Thomas More. But history is strewn with the wreckage of all the attempts to realise them.

The more practical efforts which did not dare to aim so high have been almost as impotent. We can look back upon a long succession of Communal, and Co-operative, and Industrial Societies which have aimed at appeasing the discontent of the "Have Nots" by some method of more equal sharing in the good things of this life. We shall consider, on a later page, why these well-meant efforts have broken down. Here we merely point out that, while they have failed to provide a remedy, their attempts to do so have mitigated the unrest among the more eager spirits, and have caused men to subside into a contentment with things as they are.

The third answer is that social unrest, especially in industrial countries, has been controlled and appeased through organisation among the workers. Every Trades Union, and Friendly Society, and Co-operative store, and every village club, and Savings Bank, has been a conservative force. They have worked together to raise the workman's wages, to give him security of employment and provision against sickness, to increase his comfort, and, what has a subtle potency, to give him a sphere of intellectual interest and action. In these ways

the swelling of the flood of discontent has been greatly lessened. In more recent years the gradual prosecution of political methods on the part of working men's societies, and the outlet of their energies in political life, has checked the more violent features. By turning the Trades Union into a political organisation, and by creating a labour party, the leaders of the workmen have prevented social unrest from using violence, or clamouring in the streets. They have compelled all men to listen to its complaints as these come more articulately and imperatively through their speeches and writings. It is obvious, even to those who are strongly opposed to the political action of trade societies, that the movements of social unrest have been more orderly and more largely free from anarchist tendencies, because they have found exposition and advocacy by competent leaders. Discontent ceases to meditate rebellion when it is led to entertain the patience of hope.

The fourth answer is that social unrest has been largely mitigated by the expansion of the world and the vastly increased wealth of the last half century. The opening up of hitherto unoccupied and unknown lands has given room and scope to a large number of the more adventurous and enterprising of the working classes. The emigration from the crowded centres of the old world, in an unfailling stream of hardy and industrious

8 CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

men and women, has lessened the pressure at the industrial centres. In these new lands, where each man has found an opportunity of bettering his condition and of becoming a possessor of the world's wealth, social unrest weakens and dies. The effect of that on the homelands has been to prevent the acceptance of any drastic or violent schemes of division. For the same reason, it may be noted, that while the United States of America have been flooded with the overspill of some of the worst elements of the European proletariat, social unrest is less clamorous there than in more crowded countries. For a smiliar cause, France and Germany, although stocked with the most extreme theorists, remain in a state of social quiet. Both have a large peasant proprietorship, and the conditions of the working folk, if somewhat hard and exacting, are sufficiently satisfying to allay social discontent. But as the unoccupied territories of the world are filling up, and as crowded cities are being created in the new world as in the old, with as much poverty and as narrow a margin of comfort and security, this expansion and increase of wealth are no longer sufficient safety valves for the pressure of social unrest.

II

These causes for the arrest of the settlement of social unrest and the decline in methods of violence, require only to be stated. But we are face to face with another feature of our problem, and that is the intensifying both of the urgency of the demand and the passion behind it. It is a common practice to distribute the causes of this intensifying of social unrest, under moral, and social, and economic issues. But these three forces mingle their waters in a common stream. Any suggested remedy which does not recognise their mingling and blending is foredoomed to failure. That is not to say that each of these causes is of the same importance. But it is to warn us against dreaming that any one of them is ever a cause quite independently of the other.

Among the first of these intensifying causes there is the glaring social inequality between class and class. On the one side there are men of vast fortunes with all the power and privilege which wealth secures. On the other side there are men in absolute poverty, and, in the class immediately above the poor, in a constant fear of want. On the one side there are the idle rich, and although these are matched by the idle poor, equally profligate and as justly deserving the scourge, they are contrasted with the large number of men and

women who must toil incessantly, and live in dread of losing their opportunity to toil. These two classes stand out in sharper contrast in certain details of life. Ample leisure, soft ease, artistic refinement, the means of travel and enrichment of mind are on the one side. On the other there is a life of monotony, with few and meagre pleasures, evil and unpleasant surroundings. The man who speeds through the country in his motor car, spends his spring on the Riviera, and looks out on the world through the window of a London club is certainly in a different case from a dweller in one of that city's meanest streets. It is true, of course, that in the light of certain teaching we shall afterwards consider, and of the facts which patient students of social questions set down, these things should not, and do not, matter so vitally as some men think. But the truth remains that to millions of men and women there are the things that matter most of all, and they intensify our present social unrest.

A second cause is that the wealth and consequent luxury of the one class are regarded as the production of the labour of the other. That is keenly marked, and as keenly resented, among the individual workers of every industry. The epoch-making inventions which have cheapened the manufacture of our food and clothing and articles of household use, the power of large and combined

capital to exploit labour, the ease of distribution which can carry a needle or a yard of cotton to the ends of the earth, have all tended to the swift and inevitable increase of wealth, and to the subjugation and the dependence of the worker. The worker is, therefore, stung into a sense of wrong, which becomes more resentful when he is induced to believe that his master's wealth has been wrung out of the sweat of his face. It is not so true as he thinks. But for him it seems so evident that his condition becomes intolerable. As a matter of fact the labourer's condition is vastly better both in the amount of his wages and in their purchasing power than it used to be. That is not to say that the wages are what they should be. All economists are agreed that although the wages of the working classes have risen on an average about thirteen per cent., the cost of living, as every working man thinks he should live, has risen twenty-three per cent.¹ When the labourer, therefore, in his cramped and narrow life, considers the riches and ease of his employer his discontent becomes fierce, and his indignation against the Upper Ten Thousand of English society, or the Upper Four Hundred of New York, becomes a moral anger. When Frederick Harrison says that ninety per cent. of

¹ These percentages are of no value, except to outline the broad fact of the disproportionate increase. The *necessaries* of life have not so greatly risen.

12 CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

the actual producers of wealth have no home they can call their own beyond the end of the week ; no bit of soil or so much as a room that belongs to them ; nothing of value except as much old furniture as will go in a cart ; and that they are separated by a narrow margin from destitution, so that a month of bad trade, or sickness, or unexpected loss, brings them face to face with hunger and pauperism, he is overstating his figures, painting in crude colours, and forgetting the large number of working people about whom none of these things are accurate. But they have so much truth in them, that when we set the state of the labouring poor over against the state of their comfortable masters, we understand the accentuation of our modern unrest. We realise why this unrest is most aggressive in some time of economic distress when labour haunts the ship-yard gates, or stands in a queue outside the soup-kitchen door, while its employers continue their luxury.

A third intensifying cause which is much deeper can be set down in a few sentences. It is that men have eaten of the tree of knowledge and are looking out on life with altered eyes. Even although their state is not one of hardship they cannot be content. It is not always the case that their work is exhausting, or their wages fall to the destitution level, or that their homes

are miserable, or that the comforts of life are denied them. It is simply that they have been educated, and that their appetites and tastes have been qualitatively increased. It is this qualitative development of appetite and taste which makes the earnings a man's grandfather would have thought munificent, seem a starvation wage. It is vain to educate young people, as is now being done, and to develop their taste for things beautiful, and to lead them to an appreciation of art and music and literature, and to expect them to live happily in a slum, however clean it may be made. Anyone who goes into one of our modern public schools, with its wide entrance hall, its broad and easy staircases, its admirable furnishings and artistic equipment, the pictures on its walls and the flowers in its windows, need not expect the child who has spent nine years in such surroundings to climb up to the fourth story of a tenement block, and look out from a two-roomed house on the dirty slates of the next roof, and be content. It is under the influence of this new knowledge that the Socialist orator declares discontent to be divine, forgetting that the moral quality of discontent is entirely dependent on what we are discontented with. Yet every man feels, that apart from any teaching on the grace of contentment, mere supine acquiescence in this state of things is impossible. But the attain-

14 CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

ment of the kind of life which this education has made desirable is so costly, that the most patient-minded economists, do not see how it can be realised. As the Americans express it in a terse saying, "You can't indulge champagne tastes on a lager beer income."

All this searches down into the deepest and most intensifying cause of all. That is the new ethical idea of life. Let us emphasise the word ethical, for that is the root of this whole matter. The discontented, and those who speak for them, seldom mention it, and are sometimes unconscious of it. Those of their popular leaders, who have had a Christian training, reveal the truth both by their arguments and by the moral quality of their appeals. Anyone who lives among the poor and disadvantaged, or reads the literature of the time, and especially the more thoughtful expositions of Socialism, can discern beneath the outcry against the capitalist, the clamour for a larger share, the insistence on more leisure and ease, this new ethical ideal of life. There is the demand that life must be a thing of ease and comfort, and security and interest, or it is not worth while living. Many men see that under present conditions they must go on being hewers of wood and drawers of water to the end. Many have become sadly certain that they can never rise out of a precarious and dependent life. Generations come and go,

and son follows father in the same unceasing struggle to make ends meet. The poverty of the city is more straining than the poverty of the village where neighbour helps neighbour, and the rich are seldom heedless of the needs of the poor. That state of things has been accepted for centuries by the Oriental mind, either under the influence of some religious sanction, or through hopeless apathy. But simply because this new ethical ideal has become part of every man's thinking, this dependent and narrow and precarious life cannot be quietly endured. This is the deepest reason why social unrest is increasing in volume. The industrial world is a seething pot which cannot be kept from boiling over by adroit stirring. Until this ethical ideal is satisfied, or is changed and corrected, we may expect our social unrest to continue and to increase. It has come to the hour of birth. What is to be brought forth is the most bewildering and perplexing anxiety of the practical life of our time.

III

We can now pass on to look at the forms in which these intensely felt problems are presenting themselves. The first of these is the relationship of wealth and poverty. This assumes several aspects. One of these is the getting and the spending and the keeping of wealth, with its effect both on

the rich and the poor. Another aspect is the range of the duty of the richer toward the poorer, and especially toward the absolutely poor in the State and in the community. Another aspect is the complex and involved question of the causes and the remedies for poverty. A still more difficult aspect is the possibility of the poor sharing in all that wealth can provide for man. Not the least insistent of the demands of the day is that for very greatly lessened hours, for more liberty to come and go from labour at the labourer's will, for the larger leisure and the more refined life, and a relief from the pressure of care and anxiety. All of these are only different aspects of the problem of the getting and the spending, and the keeping and distributing of wealth among men.

The second is the problem of capital and labour. It is this problem, rather than that of wealth and poverty, which has produced the present labour war between the wage-earners and those who buy their labour. It does not directly involve the the problem of wealth and poverty. This demand is made quite apart from riches on the one hand or poverty on the other, although men are accustomed to plead that a wise adjustment of the relations of capital to labour would solve many of the questions of riches and poverty. But the claim and contest between capital and labour is not made on behalf of the poor. It is made on

behalf of all workmen, many of whom are perfectly comfortable and in no danger of falling into the ranks of the poor. It is a claim based not on need, but upon justice. It is a claim for a larger share and easier conditions, because that is the labourer's due. This problem is manifesting itself in the most obvious ways. We see it in the unusual number of strikes, the demand for the minimum wage, the claim to share more largely in the profits, and in the tendency to tax all large incomes severely. Keener observers mark it in the increasing competition between master and master, firm and firm, company and company, and in the commercial rivalry between nation and nation. One of its by-products, if the term may be used, is the elimination of the small employer. He has been crushed out either by the multiple-shop, or the trade combine, or the public management of some common supply. But the real force and pressure behind all this increased competition, and these changes of method, is this imperative demand of social unrest for satisfactions it has been taught to desire, and is striving to attain in proportion to its purchasing power. This problem of capital and labour works out into the details of hours, and of unemployment, of piece-work and sweating, and of the provision for the old. It is coming to a critical point in its attitude towards the supply of the materials which labour

18 CHRIST IN THE SOCIAL ORDER

uses. This is raising the vital question of the tenure and cultivation of the land. But the real line of battle is to be found at the place where labour is demanding a larger share from capital.

The third problem is the work and status of woman. What has been called the revolt of woman is less widespread but even more insistent than the insurgent uprising of labour. This revolt is due partly to the changed conditions of our modern social life, and partly to the place the woman has come to occupy in the industrial order. The woman of to-day lives a different life from that of a generation ago. She is more largely a labourer outside of the home. As her labour always is, and always must be, cheaper than that of man, many difficult questions arise.¹ But apart from these economic considerations the ruling fact behind the revolt of woman is the same as that behind the revolt of labour. It is a new ethical ideal of life. Women are demanding a different form of livelihood, and are entering into new duties. To fulfil them, they are insisting upon economic independence. They have become eager to enter political life. Many disregard and deny any sex barrier in law, or in custom, or in nature. They believe women can do efficient and indispensable service in public life, and their

¹ Cf. Chapter X for a discussion of the wages of women.

clamant demand is to exercise the franchise. In some cases the aims set forth threaten the present constitution of the home and the family. The more advanced proclaim a different ideal of marriage from that sanctioned in Christian communities. Some of the most advanced deny the obligation of the marriage tie. Others are inclined to regard the care of the child as no longer the concern of the mother, and they depreciate motherhood as less important than the fulfilment of public duty. All of these related questions we shall consider in their place, merely setting them down here as aspects of this problem of social unrest.

IV

There are two features of modern life, unknown in former periods of unrest, that have given these demands both a sympathetic atmosphere which carries their voices, and a power which enforces them. The first of these is the prevalent passion of pity. Pity may be called the most characteristic moral passion of our time. A wave of compassion for the poor, the disadvantaged, the man who is down, and especially for all who suffer, is passing over Christendom. We may not be able to say that all men have learned the mind of Christ, but we can say that our generation has caught His spirit of compassion as it has caught nothing

else about Him. It is manifest in theology in those teachers who fix their eyes upon the suffering of men, rather than upon their sin. It is evident in our moral ideals where pain is more shrunk from than shame. The recent protest against the use of the lash for the traffickers in the purity of womanhood is a symptom of this shrinking from even the thought of suffering. But it is most apparent in our social and industrial life where any story of the mean home, or of the meagre wage, or of exhausting toil, instantly excites the reaction of pity. To be poor is to many minds the most pitiable of all calamities. The humanitarian of to-day is the most admired moralist. Those who occupy the ground, and practise the methods of the Charity Organisation Society are thought to be hard hearted. These writers who are recalling the principles and modes of Thomas Chalmers, dwell largely on the noble element of personal care and sympathy which he based his relief of the poor. But they scarcely mention his rigorous dealing with any waste or idleness, and his insistence on self-help and on thrift, from which some of the wilful poor fled out of the parish he reformed. Thomas Chalmers did not share this modern emotion of teary-eyed pity. He was a moralist rather than a humanitarian. But to-day, even the legacies which are left by the charitable, are given more largely to relieve suffering

than to promote education, or art, or morality. It is this prevalence of pity, which gives the demand of the discontented the atmosphere that propagates their cries. I do not say that compassion is to be condemned. But it should be a commonplace that those who act only from emotion often fail in wisdom. As often they disregard the great principles of justice and helpfulness. They merely please themselves.

The second feature which gives the demand of social unrest a new power is the possession of the franchise. The discontented have votes. Social unrest is not merely a tumult in the streets and a cry in the market-places. It has been armed with power. That power is so swift and decisive, it can be so quickly roused to action, and it acts with such tremendous dynamic, that even labour leaders fear to oppose demands which they know to be impossible and unreasonable. They are sometimes to be seen parleying with claims, which one would think they might know to be ethically unjust and economically impracticable. But both political parties show as little courage as the recognised labour leaders. They are chary of talking blunt wisdom to the masses possessed of an enormous aggregate vote. It is this evident fact of the absolute power of the franchise which has provoked the movement for the enfranchisement of women. They see

that their voices remain only voices, apart from votes, and they are not willing to continue the use of the voice to convince those who have the power of the vote. Very plainly when those in whose hearts this social unrest is stirring, conceive some clear policy of reform, and have that formulated in proposals which can be placed upon the Statute Book, we shall no longer have explosions of anger, or cries of defiance, but steadily sustained and determined action. It becomes of the utmost consequence that the problems of social unrest should not be discussed merely in academic circles. It is even more vital that they should not be left to orators who have a personal interest in their settlement. It is most vital of all, that the average man should have all its claims and all their denials stated and considered as dispassionately as possible. Above all it is of supreme importance, that not only this passion of pity, with its occasionally blind and spasmodic sympathy, but the forces of public opinion should be so guided, as to understand the moral significance of social unrest, and the consequences of its possible action, as these appear in the ethics of Christ. That is what the succeeding chapters endeavour to do.

CHAPTER II

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS—INDIVIDUALISM TO COLLECTIVISM

SOCIAL unrest, as we have seen, presents itself in our time in the form of three problems. The first is the problem of riches and poverty, with its acute issue in a demand for a more equal distribution of wealth and an ampler ease in life for all. The second is the problem of capital and labour, with its crucial point of a claim for a larger and juster share of the profits on the part of the wage-earners, and a greater security of employment. The third is the problem of the status of woman, or perhaps more wisely named the problem of the family, with the woman's specific assertion of a right to economic independence and a place in public life.

Now these are expression points of a social discontent which has appeared in constantly varying forms ever since society was organised. As we might expect, suggestions for dealing with the problems of unrest and schemes for amending them have appeared in a constant succession. Historical, philosophical, and critical writers have

busied themselves with theories and methods of reform. The writers of fiction have attempted to realise the ideal social condition in play and in parable. Societies have been formed for the more humble and more practical purpose of amelioration. Philanthropy has filled its hands with well-meant and healing charities. Such a volume as the *Red Book* of Edinburgh will disclose how numerous are the agencies at work in a single city, and how patient and assiduous are their efforts to mitigate distress. Yet every one admits that little or nothing has been done to remedy the evils, and the obvious criticism is made that most eager workers have failed to attack the sources of this social unrest, and have been busy rather with its palliation than with its prevention or cure. As a consequence many of the wisest and most considerate of those who work among the poor and disadvantaged become discouraged long before their hair is grey. They find that the weeds spring out of the soil more quickly than they can root them up.

That state of mind has bred in our time that zeal for conferences and discussions in whose whirl all our minds are caught. Never was the world so busy in stating new theories and formulating new methods than in this age of public conferences. No conference excites a deeper interest than that on social questions. Yet any

one who attends these conferences will observe that nothing comes out of the papers which are read, and the keen criticisms which follow. I do not mean that no action issues from them, for it can be reasonably urged that the purpose of a conference is only to confer. What I mean is that the conference closes and each speaker describes the evil, or formulates his demand, or makes his protest, but no definite or accepted standing ground is reached. A sympathetic observer is convinced of nothing except that a large number of rights and a large number of wrongs are battling with each other. He notes that while some impulsive, warm-hearted people are greatly heated over the wrongs, other people, usually with large experience, are pouring a stream of calming and cooling reasoning on their rhetoric.

Now this defect and dearth of definite conclusions, and of effective treatment of our problems, is due to three reasons. The first is that many are excited about our social unrest without adequate conceptions of its ethical significance, or any clear knowledge of the relation of the ethical to the social and economic conditions. The second is that nothing helpful can come out of any piecemeal dealing with these problems. No end is reached and little good is done by the most compassionate and self-sacrificing man who takes up the separate problems of housing, or sweating,

or unemployment, or woman's labour, or the tenure of land, without realising that all these wrongs have a common root. That is not to say that the numerous helpful agencies at work have not done commendable service in mitigating the consequences, and, to some small degree, in amending the evils. But nothing large, and nothing regenerative and preventive, has been done by these independent and well-meant efforts. The most callous office that anyone can fill is to decry the generous persons who concern themselves with these wrongs. But the most useless counsel to be given is to think that some little swift and dramatic economic surgery, or some gentle and helpful dealing, will remedy these deeply rooted evils. The third reason for this failure to reach conclusions is that few seem to have found any coherent and justifiable ideal of the social order which ought to prevail. Fewer still, as the wiser Socialists confess, have any entirely acceptable or reasonable methods in view by which any ideal can be attained. The truth is that until men realise that the causes of our social unrest are deeper than the questions of riches and poverty, work and wages, the machineries and the conditions of life, we are not on the threshold of any possible or enduring settlement. Until they recognise that any redress of the present wrong must deal, not only with the worldly

interests, but with the ambitions and passions, the hopes and fears, the intellectual ideals and the religious convictions of the race, no method of solution is, or can be, sufficient, and no proposal has any likelihood of being adopted.

These evident facts have been realised by the more thoughtful in the past centuries. The great solutions, which have caught and held the minds of their own and of succeeding generations, have all had this great merit of dealing with the sources of social unrest, and of attempting to exhaust them in a comprehensive and final way. These solutions can be classified, if we keep their general features in view and allow their local and peculiar details to stand on one side. I shall set them down in what seems to be their historic as well as their logical order.

I

The first solution is a slightly controlled Individualism. This is the first natural state of human society. Pure Individualism, which we often hear so hotly condemned, has never existed at all. That state in which every man is for himself, and the weakest goes to the wall is unknown to humanity. No man can live entirely alone unless he breaks the laws of his nature. There have been pure Individualists in theory, and they have attempted its practice. But they are now seen

either to be freaks, or anarchists, about whose perfect sanity other men are in doubt. The best example of ancient times was Diogenes who lived in his tub. When Alexander the Great paid him a visit, and asked him what favour he could bestow upon him, Diogenes gave a perfectly individualistic reply: "Stand out of my sunshine." Wordsworth, it has been said, describes Individualism in his picture of Robin Hood and his Scottish fellow-freebooter, Rob Roy.

"Because the good old rule
Sufficeth them—the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

But even Robin Hood and Rob Roy had both a clear conception of a society in which man would be helpful to man, and their conduct was rather a protest against a cruel Individualism, than an affirmation of it. The best modern instance of the attempt to realise it is that of H. D. Thoreau. In his classic book *Walden* he has described his life of loneliness, self-dependence, and carefully calculated disregard of his fellows. But all such absolute Individualism sins against the facts of life and human necessity. No man can live unto himself and remain entirely human. The hermit grows into the mis-shapen man, or the beast. The anarchist becomes the enemy of every man, and as he is the only pure Individualist, every

other man's hand is turned against him. The individual cannot be the unit of society. The individual who shuts himself up in the state of isolation and independence denies the right of society to exist.

But a modified or controlled Individualism remains as a completing solution of social problems. It may be defined as a mode of society in which each man lives as far as possible independently of his neighbour, but combines with others only to preserve life, and to secure his own outward well-being and theirs. This was the form which society first assumed. We see it in the history of those families, or clans, or tribes, which recognised binding obligations to those within their community of blood. All ownership, however, within the clan or tribe was individual. In the case of the land the ownership was vested in some head or chief, who held it as common property, and exercised over it a strictly limited authority. The whole course of progress in the development of Individualism has shown an increasing control and regulation. As numbers grew, as wealth increased, as contact with outsiders became easier, the family, or clan, or tribe, society was enlarged or broken up, and new laws were formulated. But every common law is essentially the limiting of Individualism. It virtually says that a man cannot do what he will with his own, or even with

himself. The consequence is that every mode of Individualism tends to become less individualistic. The modern State with its network of laws, and its framework of obligations, and its hierarchy of officials, is a very largely controlled Individualism. Yet the theory at its basis, and the root thought of the modern State, is individualistic. Any entrenchment on individual liberty is made with regret. It is jealously limited. It is justified not as the ideal, but as the inevitable.

That truth can be seen when we glance at this controlled Individualism facing social conditions. It has only one method of dealing with them, and that is to regulate or amend them by a minimum of law. True to its theoretic strain it allows every man a large freedom, not only to do, but to suffer. It regrets, for instance, the necessity for enforcing a poor law. It steps in only to prevent starvation. It falls back on the obligation to help, only after insisting that the individual shall do his utmost for himself. It affords him relief only when he has failed. There is nothing it avoids more scrupulously than a needless encroachment on the liberty of the individual.

Now the criticism of this controlled Individualism, in its present stage and form, is easy and decisive. No one can say that it has solved the problems of social unrest. When we observe, on the one hand, a number of people enjoying an ample supply of

the good things of this life, without regard to the needs of others, and often to their own moral degradation, and when we see, on the other side, a vast number living in anxiety, suffering destitution, and dying in pauperism, we cannot say that our present order has succeeded. It may be true that these evils are not entirely due to the individualistic basis of society. But it remains true that our order of society has not prevented them, and has not cured them. The failure of our present mode is more conspicuous when its issues are more closely regarded. Let any man walk down the streets in the East End of any industrial city, or attend a Police Court on Monday morning, or visit in the homes of those who are gathered into mission meetings, and not of the wholly regardless class, and he will be driven to confess that our present social order has not succeeded. It is to be remarked that most economists, who can see no other way than a slightly controlled Individualism, become despondent over the condition of the lower strata of the people. They fall back on the suggestion to limit the population after the methods, much modernised, of Parson Malthus. Or they make the proposal that the submerged tenth should be carried on the broad shoulders of the State through some form of disguised charity.

If controlled Individualism, therefore, is to

remain as the form of our social order, two requisites are imperative. One is that we shall require much better individuals to compose it. The other is that it must be still more closely controlled. It may not be a pleasant thought or an agreeable outlook for the richer classes in a country like ours. But they must be led to realise that if they are to enjoy the advantages, and to retain the privileges, which Individualism, as at present modified, has given them, they must be called upon to pay "ransom" for them. Mr Chamberlain left that word behind him in his political career. But he was never so near again to the heart of our social problem as on the day when he taught, with his marvellous gift of exposition, this doctrine of the necessity of ransom. If the rich wish to retain the control of their wealth, in a measure which will yield enjoyment, they will require to submit to a much severer regulation of their lives, and a much greater limitation of their freedom in dealing with their wealth, than they seem at present willing to make. They will be well advised to accept new conditions with cheerfulness.

II

The second suggestion is Communism. It is the natural escape from the failure of controlled Individualism. How that failure brings forth Communism has been vividly pictured in Henry

George's parable of the Coach. He described an Individualistic society as a coach being dragged up a steep highway. On top of the coach there sat the rich, enjoying ease and comfort and sweet air. They were free from the dust of the way and the sweat of toil. In front of the coach there sat the driver with his whip, and that whip is to be kept in mind. At the back of the coach there was the guard, whose word was law. Down on the roadway, between the shafts and pulling at the traces, were the poor. They toiled. They sweated. Sometimes they fell by the way and were cast aside. The thongs which bound them to the coach worked sores upon their bodies. Their monotonous toil worked sores in their minds. The people in the coach were not fiends. They were well-mannered men and dainty women, and often most compassionate withal. They called with soothing words to those who drew the coach. They sent them clothing for their nakedness, and liniment for their wounds. But they would not come down. Whenever these yoked toilers threatened to stop, the man with the whip was ready to apply it. For this same whip was named Hunger, and, as the Orientals say, there is no resisting the rebellion of the belly. The whip of the individualistic driver was applied and the coach went on. It is with this same conception in his mind, and for the purpose of making the same protest against

controlled Individualism, that Tolstoi writes, "The rich will do anything for the poor except get off their backs."

That is caricature, and so greatly overdrawn as to be ineffective caricature. But it holds so much truth that it presents the weakness of even a controlled Individualism, and it inspires men to invent, and to apply other modes of social order. Of these other modes Communism is the most obvious and natural. The example best known to us is that described in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. That was, however, a most imperfect instance of Communism. It allowed each man, as Peter said, to do what he would with his own. Every Christian was entirely free to keep his wealth and enjoy his landed estate. He relinquished them only of his own unconstrained will. It was a Communism which was never closely organised, and was rather a creation of a time of distress than a purposeful administration. It may be questioned if it was intended to continue even until the expected advent of Christ. Yet it remains as a historic proof of the escape which minds tormented by the failure of a selfish Individualism make into Communism. It haunted the imagination of Christian men for centuries, and it charms them still.

Yet Communism did not succeed in winning

the consent of Christendom till after the Reformation. Two barriers blocked its way. One of these was the ideal of government which the Roman Empire imposed on men's minds. It prevented even the thinkers from dreaming about a community where all men should live upon one social level, and all things should be held in common. The other barrier consisted of the brotherhoods and religious orders of the Medieval Church, into which men of communistic impulse and spirit were received, and in whose life and service their aspirations were gratified. But after the Reformation the men of the Reformed faith betook themselves to the New Testament. The record in the Book of the Acts at once suggested itself as the articles of guidance, and communes sprung up to solve the problem of our social order. Among the Anabaptists they were prosecuted with intense ardour, and seemed to them to promise the coming of heaven upon earth.

These communes, like those which have followed them in history, differed largely from each other in the application of the principles. Some allowed a large measure of individual liberty. Others permitted their members to become rich. They all differed somewhat in the pre-requisites of membership. Communism under Munzer had features markedly diverse from that practised in Moravia under Widemann, Hans Hut, and

Hubmaier, while Moravian Communism, in many respects, was unlike the more fully developed systems of St Simon and Fourier in France, two centuries later. The applications of the principle in Britain have taken, as might be expected, their own peculiar forms. Robert Dale Owen at New Lanark and at Orbiston near Glasgow attempted to use the form of the commune, and to dispense with the religious spirit behind it. Very naturally it was a short-lived and disastrous experiment. In the Co-operative movement commended by Maurice and Charles Kingsley we see the English adaptation of Communism. But it is really a communism with Individualism in its heart. There is no race to whom it is so difficult to commend any form of Communism as the Anglo-Saxon. To a proverb, the Englishman's house is his castle. Yet the impulse behind that movement, displayed most clearly by its first society of the Rochdale Pioneers, is a desire to correct a hard and unjust Individualism by an application of the principle of the commune.

Communism has had some recrudescence in America, where many of the uneducated minds have been fascinated by the attempt to realise what they assumed to be the New Testament ideal. In such settlements as those of the Oneida Brethren, and in the Brook Farm Settlement, with which Whittier and Emerson were associated, we have

the most interesting and picturesque of these attempts of establishing a commune.

A caution must be set down here against charging Communism with being a nursery of Atheism, or of practising a lax morality. There is no doubt but that Communists, who are as a rule persons of distinct and tenacious opinions, are liable to accept moral positions not possible to others. Yet on the whole most Communists have been steadfast in their assertion of the Ten Commandments. A few of them, like some Socialists of the present day, have been extreme in their attacks on religion. Others, like Robert Dale Owen towards the close of his life, have been devoted Spiritualists. Many have slighted the family, because it seemed to stand in the way of a complete adoption of their method. A few have held lax notions about the marriage tie, and most communes have entertained peculiar views as to the training of children. But on the other hand many of the communes were based on intense religious convictions, and held more rigid ideals of morality than those sanctioned in the Christian world outside their ranks.

Now the criticism of Communism can be packed into a single word. That word is failure. The Communes have not always failed to extinguish poverty, or to attain comfort and security for their members. But they have failed to solve

any of the problems of unrest for the mass of men. They have failed so completely that to-day few, if any, attempt to set up a Commune, and their dreamers have ceased to dream dreams.

They have failed for three reasons. The first is that some of the members have been disloyal to their ideals and methods. That is the story of the failure of the first attempt at Christian Communism in Acts iv. 32. There we have all the conditions set forth. We have the one mind and the one heart, the glowing ideal of a better state, and the actual sharing of the means of life. "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira, his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price." That "But" is a blow in the face to Communism. It has been given again and again. Until a state of mind has been secured which will evoke costly and absolute loyalty to the principles, Communism is destined to failure.

The second reason why Communism has failed leads us to regard a different peril. When Communes have succeeded for a time, they have grown rich, and two consequences have universally followed. They have become close co-operations, refusing to admit others into their preserve. Then they have openly disallowed their own principles, and declared their amassed property to belong to the members. One of the most

successful is the Oneida Community in the State of New York. It was founded in 1848, and in 1880 it possessed property of the value of £200,000. In that year the Commune was dissolved and reorganised as a Corporation, and renamed, significantly, *The Oneida Community, Limited*. That, of course, is only Individualism swallowing up Communism.

The third reason of the failure is that it never can be organised on a large enough scale, or in an inclusive enough way, to solve the problem of unrest. Not only must it be always done in a corner, but it demands homogeneous materials. It needs an industrious and frugal and law-abiding people. It succeeds best when based upon some religious ideal, or held together by some religious sanction. The Amana Commune, now located in the State of Iowa, distributed into seven model villages, has prospered. But its success has been due to the selected people who compose it. They are persons who would have made their way in any society. A system which depends upon picked and peculiar men and women can do nothing to heal our social unrest. The successful Communes have been only little landing places in a broad marsh, and most of their members have gone on their way, willing to let the rest of the world sink into the mire.

III

The third suggested solution is Collectivism. I use this term rather than the more common term Socialism, because Socialism has ceased to have any definite meaning. No one is safe with any one who calls himself a Socialist, unless he gives him half an hour to explain what he means. Socialists who keep a motor car, and live on dividends which they know have been gained by cheap and unwholesome labour in shipping, or mining, or manufacturing, are not to be classed with Socialists who attend a public meeting, coming uncollared and unwashed from eight or nine hours at a forge, to applaud a demand for an army of industry. It may be replied that these soft-slipped Socialists should not be called upon to practise their principles until the social order has been changed. But it is not in that way that men come to believe in a preacher's principles, or in his sincerity. These fur-coated Socialists would do more to make their views known if they stripped and took their turn at the bench, as the fervent Tolstoi did. Again, those Socialists who receive quite generous salaries as Christian preachers, and yet grow eloquent over the wrongs of the wage-earner and the darkness of the slums, and indulge in frequent denunciations of the rich, are not to be classed with the readers of the *Clarion*.

There are a number of people, usually highly emotional, who are playing at being Socialists, but they are not prepared, as their lives show, to accept any of its practical positions. They sit high and secure above the poverty and the care they might share even now. For this reason we avoid the term Socialism here, and speak of Collectivism.

Collectivism differs from Communism in two ways. It does not demand that men shall form themselves into communities, and it is, therefore, opposed to any exclusive or conditioned fellowship. Its ideal is that of ownership and government by the whole State. The State should be the only capitalist, and most forms of Communism are regarded by Collectivism as only enlarged individuals. It differs again in that it fastens its regard on the means of production, distribution, and exchange. It does not wish to interfere directly with the domestic habits and private lives of the citizens. Most Collectivists would allow a margin of personal possession. Many are quite averse to imposing upon individuals any of the minute obediences Communism demands. But all Collectivists agree that the means of production, distribution, and exchange—*i.e.* land, materials of manufacture, machineries and factories, railways, ships and ferries, horses and motors, cattle and sheep, with all banks and the other

agencies which safeguard the health and the wealth of the people—should be the property of the State. These two root ideas of the individual's personal liberty, and the State's ownership and government of the means of production, distribution and exchange, are the notes of all Collectivism. How they are to be attained provokes the usual keen difference of opinion. But all Collectivists believe that they can be attained, and they are vending their diverse theories with the assurance that they hold the only key which opens the door into the new world of comfort and security.

Criticism here must be largely speculative. We cannot say that Collectivism has failed, for it has never been tried. It has enlisted a long succession of eager expositors, who have endeavoured to commend its modes of action. But they have been great only in prophecy, and their prophecies have not been fulfilled. No one of its advocates has ever attempted to grapple seriously with the economic difficulties of Collectivism. The other questions—physiological, psychological, and religious—which beset Collectivism are usually ignored. To such a charge as this Collectivists usually reply that proof has been given of the practicability and the profit of their solution. They point to the collective supply of water and gas and electricity. They instance the working of the Post Office and the telegraph system. They

adduce, with what they think undeniable proof, the working of the municipal tramways, and, in some countries, the nationalisation of the railways. They declare that we are ripe for applying this method to the public supply of milk and bread. From these instances they argue that there is clear proof of the wisdom and success of a universal Collectivism.

Against that contention there is a destructive criticism. To begin with, these instances have been conducted only in the region of distribution, or in the supply of the simplest necessities. Their sphere has been that limited area where there is no question of individual desires or tastes, but only the satisfaction of common and universal needs. The simple fact that no successful attempt has yet been made in the spheres of production or exchange, and that no man has tried to show how any of the intricate and delicate articles dependent upon personal choice and taste and fashion, and requiring skill and inventive labour, can be produced, is evidence that the so-called proof is inadequate.¹ These facts have become so evident that a modern school of economists have fallen back upon the advocacy of Collectivism only in the sphere of distribution and transport. That is to say, that

¹ Cf. *Westminster Gazette*, 12th October 1912, for an account of the failure of a French Glass Blowing Factory attempted on collectivist methods.

a limited Collectivism can be only an auxiliary of a controlled Individualism. Obviously, one cannot reason from a water supply, or a postal service, or a railway system, to the provision of the world's entire wants and to men's individual desires.

The second critical remark is that these limited collective methods, such as a supply of water and gas, and the working of the tramways, have not only been based upon individual initiative, but they are supported by individualistic communities. Collectivism has never yet begun the working even of a distributing agency without the endowment bequeathed to it by individuals, and without depending on the earnings of individuals in other spheres of labour. It has never yet paid interest on the capital it has absorbed. Collectivists are often unaware of the enormous amount of capital they have appropriated from the past. The municipal tramways run along streets and across bridges which have been prepared by capital either provided by, or extorted from, the wages of individualistic workers. The nationalised railways run through countries which have been drained by individualists. They lay their lines and construct their rolling stock out of the taxes on the earnings of individual masters and men. What is even more important is that their managers and employees remain wage-earners, spurred on

by the hope of increased pay and of private and individual advantage. All the instances of Collectivism adduced are simply aggregations of capital worked on a completely individualistic basis. What would happen to the economic situation if all wage-earning were abolished and all private property forbidden, no man can foresee.

A third critical remark is that all these successful minor experiments in distribution are worked by picked men. Any one who knows the conditions of entrance to the public services is aware that they are rigidly closed, not only to the incompetent and the unfit, but to all who cannot pass an exceptionally high standard of physical and mental and moral capacity. But to establish a system which requires picked men for its success is only our old Communism back in a larger form. The problems of our social life are not created by the able and competent and well-doing members of society. If all were in this condition we should have no problems at all, beyond those of the envy of one man for another's place, or of one class for another's work. Our problems are concerned with the unfit, and the incompetent, and the ill-behaved, with the persons whom these short-sighted Collectivists will not, and could not, employ. The modern Socialist sees this truth and bluntly expresses it. He has given up his old Collectivism, for he sees quite clearly that such instances as

those of the tramway system and the supply of gas and water, with their ample endowments from the past, their millions of individualistic users, and their staffs of able-bodied, alert-minded and well-trained wage-earners, form no precedent for a social order, which must take up every man, and especially the weak, into its methods.

The history of all these attempted solutions is touched with pathos. They are all pregnant with high purpose. They have enlisted the strenuous endeavours of chivalrous spirits. Their failure has broken the lives of many of their supporters, and embittered the minds of as many more. But they have all had one fatal flaw. It is not that they are economically unsound, although they have never taken all the economic conditions of life into account. It is not that they have had too mean an ideal of society, although as a rule they have not realised the variety, spontaneity, and freedom in life which men demand and need. It is that they have all postulated an ethical attainment which has yet to be achieved. The latest suggested solution, by Captain Petavel, who expounds a communal enterprise working with and alongside of an individualistic society, demands a high ethical ideal in those who accept it. Its economics are doubtful. The life it portrays is not alluring. But its demand for a certain ethical quality cannot, at the present,

be satisfied. When men are prepared to submit themselves to its training schools, or to enter its labour colonies, and find contentment there, we shall have no social problems to solve. All the demands he makes imply an almost completely moralised will. But what we need is not so much the economist with his scheme, or the social reformer with his method, as the evangelist with his message.¹

¹ Cf. *The Coming Triumph of Christian Civilisation*, by J. W. Petavel, pp. 217-222.

CHAPTER III

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS—EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM AND BEYOND

WE have seen that all the attempted solutions of the problems of social unrest in the past are open to fatal objections, even where history has not written down their failure in clear characters. Each of them in succession is really the criticism and the amendment of cruder suggestions. The next we consider is another attempt to eliminate the faults of Collectivism, and to suggest a new basis for a social order of more hope, if not of more certain healing. That suggestion may be named Evolutionary Socialism.

I

Evolutionary Socialism is an advance on a former Collectivism in three particulars. It accepts the leading principles of the Collectivist theory, viz., that the State should be the sole capitalist, and that a large measure of personal liberty should be allowed to the individual. But in three regards it endeavours to amend the old-fashioned scheme. The first is that it looks out to a goal which is

larger, more comprehensive, and more beneficent than Collectivism had in view. That goal, its modern advocates declare, cannot be distinctly descried. In the last constructive manifesto, *The Great State*, inspired and edited by Mr H. G. Wells, he makes frank confession that "the torrent of criticism has washed the old forms of Collectivism clean from the masses of partial statement, hasty misstatement, sheer error and presumption, that obscured their first emergence." He is equally frank in admitting that the final form which Socialism may take cannot as yet be set down. Its problems have not yet been clearly stated. The adjustments which are required cannot be foreseen. Its economics demand a reconsideration. The difficulties of its administration and government, and especially the terrifying number of its army of officials, are riddles without answer from any quarter. All that can be said is that the goal is a State where every one shall be well-fed, well-housed, well-played, and as happy as men can be made who must face the inescapable sternness of life. Socialists would smile if any other theorists in social reform would confess that their goal had not yet appeared on the horizon. Most people refuse to enter a road whose termination cannot be anticipated. Yet that is the condition of the Socialism of to-day, and it is open to the charge that the goal is not descried,

because no man is sure that there is any goal at all.

The second particular of difference is, that the present aims of this Evolutionary Socialism are more limited than those kept in the view of the more daring Collectivism. It keeps its mind fixed upon the attainment of making the means of production, distribution, and exchange the property of the State, and of securing to every man a common share in the common good. But it does not trouble itself with other aims and ambitions. It ignores all the issues which touch upon the broader and the deeper life of humanity. It ignores them not because it regards them as unimportant, but the wide fields of science and art and literature and religion are not within its present view. No man can see how they can be brought into it under any scheme which is being advocated. The declaration that a place can be found for them and means of support given to them is worth no more than the breath with which it is made. When we remember that all of these require the possession of property which the State must neither own nor control, no one can show any way in which these large, and yet individual, and usually opposing interests can be prosecuted. The aims of the Evolutionary Socialist are as indefinite as his goal.

Besides a goal and an aim, this last phase of

Socialism has a method, and this method is its chief note. It disclaims all revolutionary modes, all employment of force, and it looks askance even on the resort to strikes. Mr Philip Snowden's last book, *The Living Wage*, sets forth his view that strikes are unprofitable, and have never issued in any adequate gain to the strikers. He seems to think that they are open to the same accusation as Mr Norman Angell makes in *The Great Illusion*. As war is wasteful and fruitless in international polity, so war is wasteful and fruitless in industrial polity. Therefore the method of this form of Socialism is evolution. It hopes to attain its immediate aims, and to pass on to an enlarging goal by adapting present conditions, transforming existing organisations, creating new agencies and departments of the State, until the State shall be the only capitalist and employer. When all work, both manual and mental, has been shared, there will be no rich and no poor, no idle and no over-worked, in the community. In this new environment of comfortable and employed people, no man will be tempted to do wrong, and the golden age shall have begun. This is naturally very popular with people who desire a change, and very easy to grow eloquent upon by public speakers and by journalists. But it has not yet produced a genuine apostolate.

Now Evolutionary Socialism strikes out with contemptuous denials at all competing theories.

It scorns Communism as merely an aggregate Individualism. It frowns even upon Co-operative societies because they encourage a multitude of small owners. It is roused to a keen protest by the teaching of thrift. The convinced Socialist declares, with Proudhon and Kropotkin, that "property is theft." He has no patience with those simple men and women who believe that "property is thrift." For he is quite well aware that the very large number of co-operators, and small investors, and depositors in the Savings Banks, are a more stubborn obstacle to any kind of Socialism than the whole aggregate of wealthy capitalists.

This modern Socialism hits out even more fiercely against the suggested solution of Syndicalism. What is Syndicalism ? It is a theory and a mode of action. The theory, broadly stated, is that the workers should own the materials with which they work and the tools which they use. The mode of action is the combining of all the workers so as to secure this end, and to extrude any employers or overseers who are not of the craft. Its point of attack is first against those who own the land and the forests, the quarries and the mines, for these are the basis of all other materials. This mode of action leads to "the general strike" on the part of all workers, until the means and materials of labour shall be given into their hands. An

illustration of what it means was given in the British Coal Strike of 1911. It was led by blundering men who did not foresee either its fruitlessness or its cost. Their blind anticipation was that the entire body of the workers could be roused and kept in idleness, and the whole stream of the wealth that supplies men's wants stopped, without crushing and starving the workers themselves. The experiences of that strike opened the eyes of many Evolutionary Socialists who had been coquetting with this Syndicalism. Mr Philip Snowden promptly repudiated it. Mr Ramsay Macdonald took pains to write a little book for the express purpose of disavowing it. A labour leader in Lanarkshire made an attempt to vend his own theory of its method to a mass meeting of miners. He was given a public whipping for his vapouring, and has not whispered his proposal again. For what all thoughtful Socialists desire is not that property shall be held by various classes, or even by the workers in combination, but that it shall be held by only one owner composed of all sorts and conditions of men. That owner is the State. Nothing could more effectually prevent that consummation than to vest the land, or the coal, or the quarries of the country, in those who labour upon them. Evolutionary Socialism, therefore, strikes out against all these competing theories,

and bids men look away to a farther goal, and endeavour to take immediate steps to secure State ownership by gradual progressions.

II

This latest born of the solutions holds a high place in the public mind, partly because its goal has not yet been set down in clear terms, and partly because its method is so free from violence. The vagueness of its issue allows its advocates to describe its beneficences in terms of charm. The wrongs it designs to remedy are so repugnant to the quickened conscience of to-day, that many are inclined to give it an unthinking assent, and few have ever searched it through and through, so as to understand what it really means. Yet the objections to it are as decisive and as fatal as to any other form of Socialism.

The first objection is that it would require such a regimentation as would kill, not the individual, but his individuality. That is the darker murder of the two. Its advocates speak of creating a peace army as a war army has been created. They declare that industry can be linked and bound together into an efficient public service in the same way as the business of the soldier. They draw pictures of the time when every man shall do his own little bit of easy, unforced, unexhausting work. He will serve the State for no more than four or

five hours a day. Every man will become a member of the army of industrials, where no one is idle, and all are marching in the perfect order of the ranks of labour. But such talk does not stop to consider the conditions of an army. To be efficient an army must consist of soldiers who obey at the word, and of officers who command. The soldier must march when he is told. He must go to rest and rise from rest at the bugle call. He must eat what, and when, and where he is bidden. He can marry only when he is allowed. In all his service he must consent to the loss of his individual liberty. On no other terms can there be an army for war. On no other terms can there be an army for peace. It may be that these speakers do not mean to exercise the rigour of militarism. They may believe that that does not require to be done. But reduce the rigour as one pleases, it cannot be less than an observance of punctuality, regularity, and unquestioning obedience to command. In the day when men realise that any Socialistic state can be produced by such a regimentation, it will be classed among the things men will not endure. Archbishop Magee offended the temperance sentiment of the country by denouncing a compulsory liquor law. He affirmed, "I would rather see England free than sober." Yet what he meant was that a sobriety obtained by compulsion involved the loss of liberty and de-

moralised the will, and that such compulsion was neither desirable, nor would it be endured. That objection applies with ten-fold force to a system which takes a man's whole working life into its iron hands.

Mr H. G. Wells endeavours to meet this objection by a statement which reveals how completely it overwhelms him. "We agree with the bolder forms of Socialism in supposing an initial proprietary independence in every citizen. The citizen is a shareholder in the State. Above that, and after that, he works if he chooses. But if he likes to live on his minimum and do nothing—and such a type of character is hardly conceivable—he can. His earning is his own surplus."¹ One wonders if Mr Wells had not suffered a moment of mental blindness when he wrote such nonsense as that. Apart from the economic fallacy entrenched in the assumption that the wealth of the State is something real and permanent, to be held in shares, independently of the labour which continually creates it,² any one, who knows what men are, knows perfectly well that many would not work at all if they could help it. Every one who has any acquaintance with the honest, indistrious working man is aware that he will never consent to do his share of the work of the world

¹ *The Great State*, p. 42.

² *Cf.* p. 180 for a fuller statement of the case.

while other men eat, and drink, and smoke in idleness. That is the mode of life against which we all protest when it is practised by the rich. When Mr Wells writes again that the type of man who would live on his minimum and do nothing is scarcely conceivable, he has only to be introduced to the treasurer of a Trades Union or the canvasser for a Friendly Society, to be told that he does not know what he is writing about. If Socialism insists that every man shall work, it will be compelled to exercise a severe regimentation. "What will you do with the work-shy and the lazy?" was the question asked of a plain and unrhetical Socialist. His answer was quite explicit and quite logical: "Shoot them." He understood that Socialism requires the drill sergeant.

The second objection is that Socialism cannot meet all the involved and complex features of our modern life. Its difficulties in enforcing labour in the larger and ruder industries are insuperable. But its problems in regard to the more complex industries and aptitudes, the tastes and the habits of the people, have never yet been looked at by any Socialist. Here it has not made one foot of advance on the old-fashioned and uncompromising Collectivism. It is easy enough to declare that it is possible to maintain men and women in freedom and to provide means and time for all the interests and adornments of the personal life, to give the

specialist opportunity for art, and literature, and science, and to afford the expert the means of research and acquisition and investigation. But it is enough to reply that no hint has been given of how this is to be done. When the State shall own all the means of production, distribution and exchange, and shall command the services of every individual, it will be compelled to apportion to every man his work. But there is no method of distinguishing the genuine artist from the pretentious dauber in the early stage of his career, or the inventor from the crank, or the youth who declares himself entitled to pursue scientific research from the youth who merely wishes a soft job. One becomes almost terrified over the thought that some State committee would be given the power of coming to decisions on such delicate and almost impossible situations. One can quite well see that even with the best intentions the most cruel injustice might be done to aspiring but yet unrecognised ability. For in a State so rigidly controlled any progress except under its sanction would be impossible for eager youth or undiscerned ability. It is in some respects even more crucial to ask what answer can be given to the question as to how the different aptitudes of men and their inherent tastes and likings are to be considered when this iron framework has been set up and they have been compelled to fill some place in it. How

the imperious demands of the religions for which numbers of men live, and for which they are willing to die, and how the various organisations of different churches and their missionary enterprises are to be carried on under a scheme of society which cannot recognise any one of them or all of them together, remains an insoluble problem.¹

The third objection is that under Socialism the motive of most marked potency for the average man is taken away. All Socialists decry competition. Many of their speakers denounce it almost as vehemently as they denounce wealth. Now there is a competition which is grinding and exhausting. There is a competition which has produced the sweating workshop and the over-driven warehousemen. Recent Acts of Parliament have rendered these evils less possible and less safe to practise. They were never profitable. It is one of the fallacies, cherished by ignorance and by passion, that sweating pays any one engaged in it, from the employer of the miserably rewarded seamstress up to the buyer of the shirt she has made. Yet there is a competition, which is neither that of the sweater or the over-worked labourer, which is of undoubted value to the individual and to the race. Every teacher knows that an honest and healthy emula-

¹ Cf. p. 109 for a fuller statement of this barrier to any form of Socialism.

tion in the members of a class, and a keen competition for its honours, are indispensable incentives. He grows hopeless over the sluggard unmoved by any desire to surpass his fellows. Every craft has gained its mastery over its tools not so much through the desire to excel in it as from the motive of surpassing others. Only the great spirits are moved by the higher impulses. The lower motive, though not so high, may still be pure. But in a Socialistic State the great mass of the people would be bereft of this motive. There would be no urgent reason for economy in their labour, or for extra efficiency, or for the attainment of superiority. Any possible reward would be both distant and small. The chief motive would be a desire to avoid the dirty and toilsome work of the world, such as no invention of science can ever make so pleasant or so interesting as other occupations. But to take away these common motives from the average man is to hinder the physical and social and moral progress of the world. Socialists do not seem to see how largely the evolution of industry and the upward ascent of the race have been due to the ambitions which spur men on to do their utmost and their best. The hundred yards sprint would not have been done under ten seconds if each man had run alone. It would not have been attempted if there had not been some visible reward to the winner who broke the tape. This onward march of humanity

EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM & BEYOND 61

has cost the sweat both of brow and of brain, but men have endured because they have had respect unto "the recompense of reward." But there is nothing the average Socialist seems to fear more than the back bent to toil and the brow wet with the sweat of labour.

The fourth objection is that Socialism is of the earth, earthy. Note I do not say that all Socialists are of the earth, earthy. There are numbers of men and women, usually of tender and compassionate spirit, who are deeply moved by tales of the submerged tenth. They read the records of destitution with a keen distress. They hear and make protest against the experiences of underpaid womanhood, and they are touched by the story of the sick heart of the "out-of-work" labourer looking in vain for employment because his hair has become tinged with grey. Although these tender-hearted people call themselves Socialists, and their sympathy is wholly to be praised, it is true nevertheless that Socialism is of the earth, earthy. It is a kingdom of earth, not of heaven. Its advocates do not usually pretend that they have seen it coming down out of heaven from God. For its sole concern is with work and wages, with earthly comfort, and with the things of time. Even its cry for ampler leisure, and for a larger share in the joys of life, and a participation in its refinement and luxury, is an entirely earthly cry.

But there are some who claim to be Socialists and explain that they demand these earthly things because they are assured that until men possess them the higher and better things will not be desired. It is one of the stock arguments of some of our preachers that a man cannot be a Christian on £1 per week, and that with the environment of some lives it is almost impossible for many to believe in God at all. These charges are historically inaccurate and logically fallacious. The only environment which is detrimental to faith and to purity is the environment of moral evil, not of industrial hardship. It is quite possible that the very hardship of a careful poverty may be a tonic to morality. It is by no means certain that the man with the full stomach will make a quicker response to a spiritual message than the man with the empty one, as Miss Vida D. Scudder seems inclined to assert.¹ It ought to be a recognised commonplace of history that the poor and distressed, and even the oppressed and wronged, make a quicker response to a spiritual message than the well-fed and well-clothed. The beggar at the gate maintained a faith unknown to the man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith?" asks one

¹ Cf. *Socialism and Character*. Chapter on "The ethical reactions of Socialism."

of the most unbending champions the poor ever had. Every man who knows the poor can recount numberless cases of homes, as holy as the home of Nazareth, maintained on less than £1 per week.

Such teaching is not only historically inaccurate, and to be condemned as the fallacy of the half-truth. But it misunderstands the real line of ethical progress. Few men seem to realise how morally deadening is a low ideal. A base precept is worse than a bad example. A bad example corrects itself, because the general conscience is able to condemn an evil seen in evident action. But a low precept creeps into the mind, and brings forth a bad practice in the end. If you teach men that to attain earthly comfort, and security, and ease are the chief gains in life, and if you go on to declare that unless men have these things they cannot be pure and true and self-denying, you debauch the conscience. You contradict the highest ethical Authority, who condemned these very things, when He said, "After all these things do the Gentiles seek." That is Christ's condemnation of this earthiness of the Socialistic ideal. He added His own declaration of the true ideal, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Socialism, with its merely earthly goal—and no honest Socialist pretends that his goal is beyond earth

and time—is a barrier to the moral progress of humanity.

III

All this sums up into a vital distinction which, when it is seized and held, will free men from dreaming that Evolutionary Socialism can allay our social unrest. Bishop Butler, in the preface to his great *Sermons on Human Nature*, declared that the fundamental blunder of Hobbes and Shaftesbury was that they “had not made a correct draft of human nature.” Their drawing of what human nature is, and ought to be, and of how it is controlled and inspired, was wrong, and, therefore, their methods of inspiration and control were wrong. That is eminently true of all forms of Socialism. Some of its advocates maintain that Socialism believes in the perfectability of human nature. But that is an entirely Christian doctrine. What Socialism seems to believe, and to base upon, is the tenet that human nature has already attained, and is already perfect. If all men were true, pure, kind, honest, industrious, self-denying, some kind of Socialist State might be organised in a month. But in such an event the world would neither need nor desire Socialism. Any kind of State, even the most purely individualistic, would be efficient. The rich and the poor would meet together and the Lord would be the

maker of them all. But so long as some men are evil-minded, and foul in desire, and vile in habit, Socialism, of the kind commended to us, is impossible. The crimes which trouble the modern State may be traced down to one of three sources. They are due either to sensuality, or to pride, or to self-will. All of these have a common root. So long as men are sensual, certain crimes will abound which no State can prevent. So long as they are proud, certain other wrongs, and especially those against which Socialists declaim, will lift their heads in oppression and extortion. So long as men are self-willed, they will gratify their selfish desires under any form of State that can be devised. Not until men have made "a correct draft of human nature" can they conceive an ideal of human society which will fit the facts of life. Not until human nature has been regenerated can an ideal State be founded and maintained.

There are some signs that the wiser Socialists see that what will block their way is not only our imperfect human nature, but our human nature itself in some of its most commendable features. When I was studying in Germany I travelled for some hours with a sad-faced man of quiet and restrained manner, whose hair was turning grey. In the course of conversation I learned that he had read widely in the literature of social reform. He expressed

his opinions with ease and charm. He was a Socialist, and he had known both Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lasalle. But he had lost all hope for the present forms of Socialism, although he held that it still had something to teach the world. He declared that there were two forces which would oppose and defeat every form of Socialism. These were, as he named them, the woman and the priest. By the woman, I learned, he meant the family and the home. With a very few exceptions, whom he thought unnatural, every woman's ideal is the home. That is instinctive to her nature and nothing will ever root out this ideal from the best women's hearts. It dies, he affirmed, only in the unmarried, or the childless, or the physiologically imperfect. But the woman who is a mother will never of her own will surrender her child to the State. Motherhood will never be content with life in a barracks, and will never accept habits of life for her children dictated by officials. Her child will be regarded as her own possession, and remain the object of her tenderest desires. Motherhood is a bundle of ambitions. It is native to a mother's nature to do her best for the child she has borne. But all that is fatal to any form of Socialism.

The second force vitally opposed to any form of Socialism is the priest. By the priest, I learned, he meant religion. Religion lays its ban on some

of the fundamental conceptions of every form of Collectivism. Religion must always be based on the appeal to the individual, and, while calling on the individual to surrender himself and to pass out beyond himself, it will jealously conserve his individuality. But still more vital is the fact that it will deal with discontent under spiritual and not material sanctions. When religion teaches men to be content with such things as they have, declares that poverty may be the higher moral condition, insists that a spiritual life is the only real and essential aim, and inspires men with a hope of a world to come, it cuts the nerve of Socialism. You will never find, said this experienced thinker, that any form of Socialism, and any form of Christianity, can long keep step in the forward movement of the race.

If all these attempted solutions are as wrong as they are impracticable in what direction must we look? Not towards any scheme, or method, or changed environment. The remedies must be as various and as subtle and as vital as the evils. They must be regenerative rather than ameliorating or curative. The moral and the spiritual must have precedence over the material. In so far as they are economic it must be a more ethical economic, not simply a more equal economic. Individualism must remain as the basis simply because no man can do another man's digestion

either in physics or ethics. But it will pass on to control and to regulate the individual more largely, and it will do so with his own good will. There will be a continually adapted Christian legislation, which will correct the ideal and the methods sanctioned by Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, whose deadly flaw is that wealth and not men is its selfish regard. But legislation with its coarse hands can never do more than express current convictions. We shall ever need all the agencies which bring in the kingdom of God.¹ We shall require all the motives which animate men to consider others, to share with them the common good, and to lift them up to the levels of independence and of freedom. We shall always require the practice of individual sympathy and of patient and discriminating service. Only as men realise what our human nature is and ought to be, and only as they endeavour to adapt the laws and conditions of life so as to meet the needs of man at his purest and best, and only as every individual is eager to breathe in the breath of a spiritual ideal, and to live out its imperatives, shall we be able to remedy the wrongs that burden our minds, and to solve the problems of our social unrest. "There is no quack remedy, no 'Morrison's Pill,' to be found through legislation or anything else for the maladies of society. The evil is too deep seated. The power

¹ Cf. pp. 82-83.

EVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM & BEYOND 69

for the extermination of poverty lies in the character of the people—what Carlyle called the Life Fountain within you.”¹

How that can be realised we now pass on to consider as it was taught us by Him who is the life and light of men. What was the social ideal of Jesus ?

¹ Kerr, *The Path of Social Progress*, p. 143. The thorough knowledge, the balanced judgment, and the penetrating sympathy of Mrs Kerr's work, give it the first place among the discussions on its special subject—the relief of the poor.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL IDEAL OF JESUS

By the social ideal of Jesus is meant His conception of the relationships and obligations of man to man in society. There is no more imperative duty in the discussion of social questions than the exposition and the interpretation of this social ideal. All Christian men are eager to know how Christ's teaching bears upon the clamorous demands of to-day. Most men admit that if the mind of Christ could be clearly expounded we should receive a guidance which can be given by no other. That is made evident by the eagerness with which all who speak and write claim Christ to be on their side. But the importance of Christ's social ideal is increased by the fact that our social unrest is largely due to the discrepancy between the ethics of Christ and the actual state of social conditions among us. Yet we must beware of looking on Christ merely as an asset on either side of contesting positions. We must be willing to patiently consider His social ideal, in all its breadth and depth, and to accept any and every conclusion whether it support our ideal or not.

I

Any interpreter of the mind of Christ is met at the outset with three difficulties. The first is, that Jesus was not a systematic teacher, or at least His teaching is not given to us in systematic form. He taught His age in the mode which was most in accordance with its Oriental usage. His method was to state His truths in pointed sayings, in memorable and significant parables, and in brief expositions. The Western method is to lay down premises which are supported by proofs and to draw from them the conclusions which seem justified by logical reasoning. It is more difficult to apply the sayings of an Oriental teacher, deep, trenchant and unforgettable as they are, than to take up the formally stated *dicta* of a Western thinker. Beyond this vital difference there is the fact that Jesus spoke at times with the rapture of a poet-prophet. His teaching has suffered from prosaic and formal interpreters who have not been patient in applying a gnomic and impassioned utterance to the contentions of our time.

The second difficulty is, that we cannot say that Jesus held the conditions of our modern world in His survey. We cannot think that He had in view our vast modern cities, with their closely packed populations and their developed industrial systems. We need not think that such a remark assails the

accepted truth of the Deity of Christ. It merely emphasises the other truth of His real humanity. It is a consequence of His humiliation that He consented to become, in a real sense, the child of His age. As Paul says, "He emptied Himself, and was found in fashion as a man." Jesus spoke with the social life of His own time in view. It is not always safe, and it is seldom fair, to apply a statement, whose form is conditioned by the life of Palestine, directly to the problems of our Western civilisation. We require to consider the difference between life in Jerusalem or the cities of Galilee, and life under the relationships of our industrial order, before we can apply Christ's sayings. In a word, before we can apply Christ's teaching, we must gather it from His sayings and doings, and condense it into universal principles of action.

The third difficulty is, that all Christ's social teaching must be related to His claims for Himself and to His supreme purpose. We must first understand His ultimate aim before we can understand His message. That is true of every teacher. It would be absurd to take a saying of Socrates, or Augustine, or Luther, or Bishop Butler, or John Stuart Mill, or any other commanding teacher, and expound it without reference to his system of thought and to the ideal toward which his teaching trended. Jesus has suffered more than any other teacher in this regard. His unique

claims and His singular purpose are commonly left, when men discuss His social teaching, entirely on one side. But we shall do Him a manifest injustice if we quote any of His profound sayings without regard to the engrossing aim of His life.

Here, then, at the outset, we must remember that Christ was not merely a teacher or a prophet, or a saint of sublime character. He was not a social reformer at all. No one can pretend that to be any one of these things, or to be all of them, was His supreme and controlling purpose. Whatever place men may give Jesus in their thought, they all admit that the records of His life set forth His supreme purpose as the revealing of the Fatherhood of God, the leading of men back to Him and to His obedience, the giving to them of new motives for doing God's will, and their inspiration and comforting with the quenchless hope of a life to come. It can only misinterpret His teaching to quote a sentence here and there, as labour leaders and Christian preachers sometimes do, and apply it directly to settle some twentieth-century social problem. They do Jesus a graver injustice when they prepare a whole volume, in which they gather together every sentence that seems to support their assertion that Christ posed as a social reformer, and ignore the mass and weight of His teaching which gives that statement the clearest denial. We shall not

reach Christ's social ideal unless we keep in mind that He came not merely to reform the social order of all time, and not only to teach men righteousness, but "to seek and to save that which was lost."

II

When we take up the teaching of Jesus to learn His conceptions of the relationships and obligations of man to man in society we have not far to seek. Jesus found Himself heir to a distinct social ideal. That ideal He accepted in its main outline, although, as with everything else He accepted from the past, He enlarged and spiritualised it. It was the social ideal as conceived by the Hebrew law-givers and prophets. As Jesus found it in men's minds it had a definite outward form. That form had been reached after long centuries of adaptation and development. The early social ideal of the Hebrews was that of a few tribes in close kinship and alliance with each other, under the care of elders or rulers, with the guidance and teaching of specially inspired seers. The second stage in the development was the forming of these closely linked tribes into a larger and closer unity under a chosen leader. The last and consummating stage was that of a nation gathered round a single capital city, which was the centre both of its civil and religious life, with a king at its head. But the dominating fact throughout this progress

and development was the interplay of a theocratic basis and a democratic form. On the one hand, the people held themselves as answerable in the last resort only to God. On the other hand, they chose their king, and they claimed the right to dismiss him, even when they clung in deep gratitude and enduring loyalty to one dynasty.

This moral and spiritual ideal of a kingdom Jesus inherited and accepted. But to its external form He paid no regard. He taught that the conception of an earthly ruler, as guardian and leader of the Hebrew people, had had its day.¹ He made the great distinction that there was no more a kingdom of Israel, and a kingdom of David, but a kingdom of heaven and a kingdom of God. Under these two pregnant and complementary phrases, both of which Christ used, the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, Christ included every aspect of His social ideal.

A brief examination of the larger details of this ideal will disclose the significance of Christ's conception. To begin with He accepted its basis of an inviolable Individualism. When we take the crucial test of the tenure of the land we see how deeply this truth was embedded in the Hebrew mind. The frequently affirmed statement of the Jewish law is that the land is not the property of the State or of the community, but of the individual

¹ Acts i. 6-8.

as an inalienable possession. As nearly as possible the Hebrew ideal can be stated in modern terms as a peasant proprietorship. That proprietorship was limited by the law that a man is not at liberty to sell his land to a stranger. He must conserve it in the interests of his family. The daughters of Zelophehad must have their patrimony continued. Ruth was an incomer, yet she was the heir to her husband's possession. Naboth could not sell his vineyard even to the king. That state of things was broken in upon by the Captivity and the Exile. It was impossible to realise it after the return of the remnant to their own land. But we find the proof of a stubborn loyalty to the idea in the fact that Joseph and Mary, although living in Nazareth, kept their connection with their ancestral land in Bethlehem as a sacred right. Now that cardinal provision of an individual possession was the basis of the social ideal of the Hebrews. These Hebrew ethical teachers saw clearly, what is ignored by many modern social reformers, that our wealth is more dependent upon the forces of nature than upon either labour or capital. They realised that the land and its renewed resources are the ultimate basis of real wealth.¹ Every family, therefore, had its provision from the land. If every man had his land in secure possession all would be well. The prophet draws

¹ Cf. The application of this truth to the Land Question, p. 201.

his vivid picture of a happy social state when every man shall "sit under his own vine and fig tree" (Mic. iv. 4). That ideal was utterly impossible in Christ's own time when the Plain of Galilee was packed with people, and Jerusalem was a large and wealthy city often crowded with strangers. It was rendered hopeless by the Roman overlordship of the land. Christ's clear eyes saw that it was no longer desirable. Yet it remained the ideal in the heart of every Israelite. The conception behind it was this truth that life can be lived rightly only on the basis of an inviolable individualism. That basis Christ accepted and enforced. Nothing is more certain than His jealous regard for and impassioned interest in the individual.

A second feature of the Hebrew social ideal was that while there was absolute equality before the law, and a perfect equality of opportunity, except in regard to the priestly office, there was no idea of equality of gift, or of rank, or of reward. The modern conception of equality which is supposed to be germane to democracy was not accepted by the Hebrews. They submitted to inequalities in wealth, in endowments, in station, and in office, as natural and inevitable. The apostle Paul, writing long after he had relinquished the external forms of the Hebrew ideal, shows his acceptance of its spirit when he bids the Christian people

hold their religious leaders in reverence, and submit themselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake. He enjoins obedience to the civil magistrate, even although he was a Pagan administering unjust laws. The Hebrew in him was not changed, and did not require to be changed, by his Christian experience. The thought that a common level of work and wages, of rank and of reward, should be maintained did not enter the Hebrew mind. There is no trace of it in the teaching of Jesus. He never confounded justice with equality.

A third feature of this social ideal on which the genius of the Hebrew laid especial stress was its religious sanction. Here we find the wide gulf between the social ideal of the Old Testament and every other ideal which men have conceived. Its first regard was that God should be kept in mind, and its whole course of development corresponds to the enlarging conception of God and His will. All modes of government, all enactments and laws, and all conditions of life were regarded as wise and good, if they ordered a state in which men could serve God and keep His commandments. A condition of society was banned as entirely evil, however it might advance the wealth and the comfort of the people, and however it might delight them in learning and in art, if it hindered the people from serving God. Prosperity was not

the first aim of the Hebrew nation. The wrongs of society were as keenly felt then as now. Poverty laid its lean hand on men's lives and brought them to misery. The disorders and oppressions of evil government roused the prophets to fierce denunciation. Yet no teacher ever suggests that all men need is an access of prosperity, and most teachers are keenly alarmed lest Israel be tempted to the modes of life which made the surrounding nations wealthy and powerful. "What does the Lord require of thee," asks Micah, "but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God"? That is not only the climax of life in the Jewish ideal. It is its source and spring. It lifts us, as it lifted all who accepted it, far above those grosser conceptions that ease and security and luxury, and a purely earthly satisfaction, can be a sufficient social ideal.

III

Now that was the social ideal to which Christ found Himself heir. As I have said He accepted it, but He enlarged and spiritualised it. He made it the ideal not only for the Hebrews but for universal humanity. He did not care what external organisation conserved it. No one can say that Jesus Christ cared whether the State was a pure democracy, or an organised republic,

or a wise and high-motived monarchy. He did insist that some form and order are requisite, and that obedience to the law is the paramount duty. "Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Matt. xxii. 21). He did not insist that every man should have a share of the land. The population of Palestine and its industries had become too great to be helped by the old law of tenure, or by any new laws which would secure a common possession. He gives no hint that He desires to see every man sit under his own vine and fig tree. To settle the land question was not the first thing, or the vital thing, to be done. He sees that men must now dwell in cities. Life, in the view of the New Testament scriptures, begun in a garden. But it is to end in a city. Jesus did not wish to bring back the garden again. Life in a garden may be an idyllic existence, but life in a city is the higher condition and the more helpful discipline. Already in Christ's own time the problems of outward life ran down to the making of the city a fair and wholesome habitation. That is mirrored for us in the Book of Revelation, where we find that the writer conceives of life as lived out in a city. It is a city with streets of gold, with wide spaces and clear waters, with trees whose leaves do not fade, whose gates are open continually, but only to those who are pure

in heart and life. That is the vision of God's garden city, and it enshrines every feature of the old Hebrew ideal, never more true to it, than when it says that "the Lamb is the light thereof."

As Jesus did not lay any stress upon the possession by every man of the land, neither did He emphasise the necessity of ranks and orders, or of offices and authorities. He pays supreme deference to the individual liberty. He is eager that men should have equality of opportunity. He observes a constant obedience to the powers that be, even when they do Him a personal injustice. But He does not betray any wish to level down in social life, nor express any desire to level up. What he does is to emphasise the religious basis and sanction of life, and to find, in that recognition, the secret of the solution of all other questions.

How then shall we define in simple terms this enlarged and spiritualised kingdom of heaven, or kingdom of God, as it is expressed in the teaching of Jesus? *It is the rule and realm of God in the hearts and lives of men.* What Jesus did was to plant within men's hearts and make operative in their lives, the seeds of a new social order which is finally to become the only rule and realm among mankind. He gave us the simplest exposition of it in the Lord's Prayer, when He bids us entreat, "Thy kingdom come." He adds immediately

his exposition of that request in the words, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." This lifts us far above all the details which men draw from the teaching of Christ, and keeps our minds free from some of the entangling and partial expositions of His mind and purpose. When the will of God is done on earth, as in heaven, the kingdom of God and of heaven shall have fully come. Every social problem shall be solved, and all social unrest shall be stilled. Then, and not till then.

When we keep clearly in our minds this meaning of the term, the kingdom of God, we are able to make some valuable distinctions. Even with writers who profess to expound Christ's ideal there is a strange confusion as to its meaning. One of these is to consider the kingdom of God another name for the Church. But the kingdom of God is a larger, more transcendent, and more enduring order than the Church. It includes every agency in which society can be organised. It includes the family, the city, the school, the university, the republic of letters, the fellowship of art, the industrial order, with its Chambers of Commerce and its Trades Unions, the economic system, and every organisation which endeavours to develop manhood and womanhood, to enrich human life, and to enlist men's energies in pure and recreating activities. Nor again is the kingdom of God another name for the State. That is only

a more secular form of the fallacy that the kingdom of God is the Church. It is a larger, more transcendent, and more enduring order than any State. It is simply the name for a social order, duly organised for human well-being, penetrated by a passion for righteousness, and lived out in obedience to the will of God. It is the old Hebrew ideal, once conceived in the terms of the narrow land the Hebrews inhabited and the peculiar conditions imposed upon them, but now made as universal as humanity, and adapted to the conditions of all time to come.

Within the circuit of this social ideal the problems of wealth and poverty, capital and labour, man and woman, parent and child, with all their complex and attendant issues find their solutions. When we understand the aims and methods of the kingdom of God we shall be able to bring up every problem into its light, and find the answer to all the questions ethical, social, and economical, or at least discern the lines along which we can proceed to their settlement, and so heal all social unrest.

IV

We can now pass on to consider the methods by which Christ's social ideal is to be attained. When we speak of the methods we do not mean those details of law, and custom, and conduct, in which Christ has given so large a liberty. We mean rather the

methods by which this kingdom can be set up in men's hearts and lives. There are two truths which are vital and governing. The first is that the kingdom of heaven can be built only on individuals who have come into a relationship of faith and obedience to God. Jesus had a supreme respect for the liberty of the will. He never used coercion of any kind. Even urgent persuasion was seldom found upon His lips. To use the most vivid metaphor in the Scripture, He only stands at the door and knocks. That liberty of the individual He respected to the end. When men were turning their backs upon Him, and upon their own well-being, His one word of protest was, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life." For this reason Christ's first appeal is to the individual. As he could build His church only on twelve men who had come into a relationship to God through Him, so He can build the kingdom only on men who have accepted His ethical basis. There may be some who are still alien to Him but are influenced by His teaching, and these may be so far helpful. But they can at best be only hewers of wood and drawers of water in the kingdom of God. Its builders, even in a labour colony, or in a convict settlement, or in the larger affairs of life, can only be those individuals whose aims are the aims of Christ, whose wills are subject to His dominion,

This cardinal point is sometimes read as though it were an assertion of pure Individualism, to the neglect of all social duty. It has been described as the pitiful selfishness of saving one's own soul. But the individual man who is content with saving his own soul is not a Christian at all.

“Heaven does with us as men with torches do,
Not light them for themselves.”

There may be men who call themselves by Christ's name and spend their time in the culture of their own religious life. But these men are disloyal to Christ's ideal. It may be safely said that they have not *seen* the kingdom of God. It is impossible to work morally except through the individual. But the first duty, as it is usually the most imperative desire, of the man whose will has been renewed, is to see that other men also are within the care and the comfort of God.

The second leading truth about Christ's method is, that he did not attend directly to the worldly condition of men. Whether they were rich or poor did not matter to the homeless Christ, who had not where to lay His head. Whether they were high or low in station was of no concern to the village carpenter. Nor did He insist that men shall have earthly security and abundant comfort. To anxious minded men, living from day to day on scanty means, He uttered His rebuke of their fretting: “Be not anxious about to-morrow.

Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.' Nor did He allow men to think that ample means and abundant leisure were much to be desired. He exacted from His followers a life of poverty and a pilgrim's detachment which ended in a cross. He did not dream that if a man had no prospect of coming to years of worldly ease and honour he should think his life not worth living. This does not mean that Christ had no discerning eye for the wrongs of the poor or the strain of the overburdened. It does not mean that He was indifferent to the evils practised by the rich and highly-placed of His time any more than He was to the burdens laid upon the heavy-laden by the dominant religious teachers. But it does mean that he was not deeply concerned as a primary thing about the distribution of wealth, or about the abundant provision and the earthly honour, which seem to many men the true objects of desire. The whole method of His life was to bring the rule and realm of God into the hearts and lives of individuals, and through their lives of high devotion to things unseen, to heal both the sins and sorrows of humanity.

V

Now when we set Christ's social ideal with its aims and methods against those which are advocated in our time three contrasts stand out. The

first is, that Christ fastens His thought not on the State and its form, but on the man and his spiritual destiny. All our modern theories endeavour to heal our social unrest by a new social order. All these forms of social order attempt to increase the well-being of men by an adjustment of the environment. As we have seen the root cause of the long succession of failure is that their advocates believe that nothing more is required. To put it simply, they assert that if you will only make the sty a clean, comfortable place, the pig will be radically changed in his personal habits. But Christ gave slight heed to the environment of His time. He lived in a world of evil, grosser and darker than we know. It was a world of misgovernment and political corruption such as we could not endure. It suffered oppressions and slaveries that Christianity has made impossible. It was full of men in bitter revolt against all these wrongs. Numberless communities sought relief from them, and proffered healing to all who would enter within their narrowing walls, and practise their ascetic rule. There were Socialists in those days, as convinced as the Socialists of our time, and there were passionate Zealots calling aloud in the market-places, all eager to change the external order. Jesus did not concern Himself with them or with their plans. He fixed His eyes on the man, not on the environment. He taught

us that until we change the man, we need not, and we cannot, change the social order. Mr William Temple says, "If you take some millions of people just like ourselves, generous up to a point, but still predominately selfish, with varying abilities, and leave them to live together for several generations, the result would be something like the horror of our present European civilisation. The sin that has made it is just our sin. That is what our sort of character works out at, if you leave it alone."¹ Jesus had a controlling purpose which did not leave our sort of character alone. He set to work to make new men, knowing that when we have new men we shall forthwith have a new state. "Christianise the social order," some men proclaim. "Socialise your Christianity," others cry in reply. Jesus would listen to both cries without being moved. He would say, "Except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

The second point of contrast is, that all outward condition is to be tested by its power to discipline character. The aim of the kingdom of God and the purpose of all the agencies within it, from the school onward to every organised society, is to perfect character. That truth is being increasingly understood even by men who have no open allegiance to Christ. One reason for the modern

¹ *The Kingdom of God*, p. 75.

condemnation of easy and thoughtless almsgiving is the wrong it does to character. Men are coming to see that it is better for a man to starve than to be fed until he becomes a craven pauper. Many of Christ's denunciations of riches, and of men who occupy high place, are due to His clear conception that their condition had injured their character. Every Socialist who will pause for a moment, and recall his own words against the rich, and his keen denunciations of their sloth and insolence, will realise that here he is keeping step with Christ, and condemning the rich because of their character. What both rich and poor need is to use their condition so as to become truer, and juster, and kinder men and women. It will serve no end to make every man comfortable, and to secure every family £200 a year for five hours a day of labour, and to render accessible to them all the treasures of modern learning, if they are men of evil character. If a man is slothful, or drunken, or dirty in his habits, that kind of well-being only gives him the larger opportunity of doing evil. Therefore Christ does not consider that any outward condition is good in itself. It is to be judged by its power to discipline character.

The third point of contrast is the most vital of the three. It is this, that Christ's social ideal is a kingdom of heaven, with the eternal life in view.

That is to say, it is a kingdom whose aim and whose motives touch God. We should not wonder that the modern Socialist is so often contemptuous of religion and a reviler of its verities. Sentences could be quoted from Karl Marx, Engel, Bebel, Belfort Bax, and Blatchford, which are stupidly and viciously irreligious. They have discerned that at the root the heavenly ideal of Jesus and the earthly aims of Socialism are keenly opposed. Jesus consummated life in two great commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Any one who listens to a modern Socialist, and reads these two commandments, and marks their order, will understand the keen opposition he maintains toward the Christian faith. The one is a method of love, the other a system of law. The one sets God first. The other does not care to keep God in its thought.

Why, then, are so many inclined to favour some form of Socialism? Quite apart from the fact that many have only a vague knowledge of its aims, and its impulses, there are many simpler reasons. Some are eager to try any method which promises to remedy some of the glaring wrongs of the time. Others are angry with the rich and their ways. Others are envious of their soft lives and dainty luxuries. Others are filled with a keen pity for

the poor and their dark and narrow homes. Others are moved by a desire to advance Christ's kingdom by amending that social order which so grievously hinders it. All of these turn their eyes to some idealised Socialism. But few, if any, have ever seriously considered either its goal, or its aim, or its methods. They are like people who suffer from an obscure disease, and run off to any fair-spoken vendor, who proclaims his drug as a peculiar remedy. It seems to me evident both as a matter of exposition, and of history, that there is no other way than to bring in the social ideal of Jesus—the kingdom of God—into the hearts and lives of men. That method may seem tormentingly slow. All moral progress is slow, even in our individual selves, and it is slow in the race. Yet if we realise what Christ has done already we shall not despair of the coming of the kingdom of God. Listen to this compact, and yet nobly expressed summing up, of the work of Christ. “Under the inspiring influence of Christ's teaching and example the Christian Church asserted the individual rights of man; recognised the Divine image in every rational being; taught the common creation, and the common redemption, and the destination of all for immortality and glory; raised the humble and lowly; comforted the prisoner and captive, the stranger and exile; proclaimed chastity as a fundamental virtue, elevated woman to a dignity

and equality with man; upheld the sanctity of the marriage tie; laid the foundations of the Christian family and home; moderated the evils and undermined the foundations of slavery; opposed polygamy and concubinage; denounced the exposure of children as murder; made relentless war on the bloody games of the arena and circus, on the shocking indecencies of the theatre, and on cruelty, oppression, and vice; infused into a heartless and loveless world the spirit of love and brotherhood; transformed sinners into saints, frail women into heroines, and lit up the darkness of the tomb by the bright ray of unending bliss of heaven.”¹

The task laid upon this generation is to interpret and understand this Christian social ideal, and to apply it in a better social order through the lives of men and the laws of each land. Our immediate purpose is to search and settle, by its light and its impulse, the problems of wealth and poverty, capital and labour and the place of woman in the State and society. These we shall pass on to take up in succession.

¹ Schaff, *Ante-Nicene Christianity*, vol. i. pp. 385-6.

CHAPTER V

THE POSSESSION OF WEALTH

THE social ideal of Christ is summed up, we have seen, in His phrase the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven. That kingdom is a social order on earth, here and now, but it cannot be read and expounded as a system of jurisprudence, or a code of laws. It cannot be interpreted as demanding any special form of civil government. Fundamentally it is the rule and realm of God in the hearts and lives of men. Its declaration and prophecy are that when this rule and realm is as absolute on earth as it is in heaven, this world shall become a paradise of God.

The distinctions between Christ's social ideal and all other commended solutions of our social unrest can be expressed in three contrasts. It keeps its eyes upon the man, not upon the State. It has regard to external conditions of life chiefly in view of their discipline of character. It is essentially religious in its bases and sanctions, for it is a kingdom whose issues and rewards transcend those of earth and time. When we take these three statements together we find that the ruling

thought of the teaching of Jesus in social questions is exceedingly simple to state. It is the conception that all the problems of the better social order are the problems of the better man. Not only does it assert that the better state does not make the better man, but that the better state cannot be organised without the better man. It passes on to the further declaration that the better man is created only by a loyalty to God revealed in Christ and by a life of obedience to His will. These truths, stated thus in religious terms, are at root the same conception as Herbert Spencer definitely expressed when he wrote, "There is no political alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts." To use Herbert Spencer's terms Christ taught that the first imperative is to create golden instincts. Mrs Browning puts the truth in her more impassioned way—

"It takes a soul
To move a body ; it takes a high-souled man
To move the masses, even to a cleaner sty.
Ah, your Fouriers failed,
Because not poets enough to understand
That life develops from within."

When we interpret and apply Christ's social ideal to our modern problems we begin with the question of wealth. Although the problems of poverty are the more pressing they cannot be dealt with until we have made up our minds as to the

justification of wealth. It will be found that all who are concerned with our social unrest fix their eyes as ardently upon the rich as upon the poor. It is a prevalent obsession with some that the rich are the cause of the poor, and that the short and speedy way to abolish poverty is to despoil the rich. There are others who are asking, on different grounds, whether there should be any rich at all? Some of the more extreme of these levellers seem to desire the passing away not only of riches, but of any possibility of private property. Many others who have formed no theory feel most keenly the contrast between those who are rich and secure, and those who are dependent on their daily wage. The quickened appetite for what riches can give, and the increased power of wealth in modern life, foster these modes of feeling. Many men who are not poor, and have never known discomfort, have a tormenting sense of the power of riches to give ease of mind, and ample leisure, and covetable opportunities for refinement. For all these reasons the question of the possession of riches looms first upon the horizon, in spite of the really more important problems of poverty and of capital and labour. All the issues of the getting and the keeping, the using and the spending of riches are being re-examined. Our purpose here is to set down the ethics of the possession of wealth under Christ's social ideal.

I

What are the data for our exposition? To begin with there is His life in its external conditions and social environment. Then there are His friendships and intimacies, and His conduct in them. Then we are called upon to consider His teaching. Lastly we must keep in mind the interpretation of His life and message as given us by His first followers. It is an inference, which would not be denied in regard to any other teacher, that His first disciples are trustworthy guides to their Master's meaning.

When we examine Christ's own life we reach the undebateable conclusion that neither poverty nor riches occupied a large place in His mind. It is quite clear that the prudential prayer of Agur, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," was not a petition which Christ would have offered. He had no desire to be rich. He has as little desire to live in middle-class security. Nothing would shock us more than any sentence in any gospel, yet to be discovered in an Eastern monastery, which would reveal the slightest taint of a desire to escape His poverty. Jesus willingly chose to be poor. His life can be written in three chapters, all of them annals of the poor. In the first chapter we read, "She brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid

him in a manger." He was born in poverty. In the second chapter we read, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He exercised His ministry in poverty. In the third chapter we read, "When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb which was hewn out in the rock." He was buried in poverty, and laid in His grave by charity. The story of His life might be read, as it has been read, as a commendation of that state of poverty which seems to so many not only the direst misery, but the cause of every other evil.

When we consider Christ's friendships and intimacies we get clearer light on His attitude toward wealth. From His own life, had that been our only source of information, rash minds might have deduced that He was entirely opposed to riches. That conclusion has been drawn. Many well-meaning persons have declared that Christ expected His genuine followers to become as poor as He chose to be. But Jesus did nothing of the kind. He called upon some of His disciples to leave all to follow Him. Apart from the question of how far that was actually done, or what that call meant, for instance, to Peter and to John, we see that it was largely a necessity of the peculiar service He desired from His apostles. They left all, as a foreign missionary to-day must turn his back on much which other Christian men may enjoy.

He must sometimes deny himself marriage and a social life, such as is the highest duty of other men. When Jesus called upon the rich young ruler to sell all that he had and give to the poor, He made a demand which was unique and exceptional in its form. The reason of the demand is evident. His riches were the peculiar obstacle both to his attainment of a higher spiritual level and to his discipleship to Christ. This same demand is made in spirit, though not in the same form, from every man who would be a disciple. Every man has something which is his peculiar, engrossing, and hindering wealth. That he must surrender it he will follow Christ.

This conclusion is confirmed by the evident fact that He did not frown upon the wealth of His friends and acquaintances. He did not call upon them to impoverish themselves. The women who followed Him from Galilee were persons of substance. They were not asked to join the ranks of the poor. Martha and Mary and Lazarus maintained a home of generous hospitality. Mary was possessed of a costly box of spikenard at a time when only the well-endowed among women had possessions at all. Zacchæus was not asked to surrender his possessions. When he offered to make restitution to the poor he promised only one-half of his goods. There is no hint that Jesus thought that he should surrender all. Nicodemus

was a man of wealth, but he was not told that his riches stood in the way. A very different kind of possession was the barrier he had to break down. Jesus accepted invitations to rich men's tables, and nowhere hints that the giving of these feasts is an offence to Him. When He declares that such feasts should be given not only to one's friends but to the poor, or when He censures them as ostentatious displays, He implicitly sanctions the possession of wealth. Beyond these obvious indications of Christ's mind there lies the evidence of His parables. These are framed, in a large number of cases, on the presumption that it is wise and commendable both to earn and to keep possessions. Plainly Jesus did not condemn men who were rich. No word of His abolishes private poverty, even when that property is ample and the means of a worldly eminence.

The sayings of Jesus present more difficulty. It is easy to set down a number of statements which seem to condemn wealth without reserve. "Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth." "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God." Such emphatic sayings as these, had they stood alone, or been

supported by the trend of Christ's life and by the principles of His conduct, would have carried great weight. The conclusion would have been almost inevitable that Christ was opposed to all accumulation of wealth, and that if His followers were loyal to His counsels there could be no rich men among them. But before we can come to any conclusion we must take into consideration some of the simple facts about the New Testament record. This applies both to the sayings of Jesus and to the teaching of His followers in the Epistles.

The chief consideration is that a critical examination of the Gospels and Epistles has discerned what may be called a two-fold strain of teaching on wealth and poverty. A severer judgment on riches and a more favouring attitude toward poverty has been found in the Gospel of Luke and Epistle of James, than in the Gospels of Matthew or Mark or John, and in the Epistles of Paul. Throughout the Gospel of Luke there is a tendency to regard riches with a condemning eye. To take one crucial instance. Where Luke writes (vi. 20), "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God," Matthew (v. 3) writes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Scholarship is not agreed as to which is the more accurate report. Nor is there complete assurance that these are reports of the same saying. They may be both words of Jesus spoken at different

times. Luke's sentence is the more difficult, and that tends to confirm it. On the other hand, Matthew's beatitude on poverty of spirit is more in accord with Christ's teaching and conduct, so that the balance of judgment would seem to fall on the side of the opinion that Luke interpreted Christ as speaking of a temporal poverty, when He had reference rather to a spiritual poverty. The Epistle of James betrays the same keen and quickly roused moral indignation against wealth. When James writes such a characteristic sentence as, "Go to, now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your misery which shall come upon you" (Jas. v. 1), he seems to pass an absolute condemnation upon riches. Yet this tendency in James requires to be related to the much larger and clearer strain of teaching before we can reach conclusions as to Christ's mind on the possession of wealth.¹

This severe strain of teaching in Luke and in James has been accounted for in several ways. It is not difficult to explain the hardness in the Epistle of James. He was the leader of the Christian Church in Palestine, and its revered minister in Jerusalem. That Church was poverty-stricken and oppressed from the first. Its members had been bitterly persecuted and were always in a distressed condition. The richer Churches of the Gentiles were moved by its needs to send

¹ Cf. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, chap. iv.

contributions for "the poor saints in Jerusalem." James himself was a Jewish Christian, and a man of ascetic spirit and austere life. It is easy to see how, with his personal convictions and his deeply vexed spirit, this tinge of extreme hardness crept into his writing. It is the evidence of a deep moral passion against those who wrong the humble Christian folk.

This does not account for the keen feeling on the part of Luke, who was a Gentile. It is more likely that Luke was affected by Ebionite tendencies. The Ebionites in Palestine was the largest of a number of ascetic communities and sects who practised poverty. Luke's Gospel reflects the austere virtue with which these abstinent stood out against the glaring wrongs of their time. But all this leads us to regard Luke and James as uttering an individual and special testimony, rather than as expounding either the mind of Christ or its interpretation by the Christian Church.

When we turn to the other witnesses of the New Testament we find that the broad teaching of Christ is repeated and enforced. Paul, who was Luke's master, has no sympathy with Luke's severe condemnation of wealth. He accepts poverty for himself, and as gladly, as Christ accepted poverty. He says emphatically, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content ;

I know both how to be abased, and how to abound ; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need " (Phil. iv. 11, 12). That is Paul's careful and considered pronouncement. With Paul, as with Jesus, it was a matter of no moment whether he was rich or poor. Nor does he denounce riches in other men. When he declares, " God loveth the cheerful giver " (2 Cor. ix. 11), he evidently accepts the position that the rich are at liberty to keep and to use their possessions. So far from regarding the renunciation of riches as a supreme virtue, he declares (1 Cor. xiii. 3), " And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Paul's whole position can be summed up in a counsel which reflects his mind. " Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy " (1 Tim. vi. 17).¹

This interpretation is sealed upon our minds by one decisive historic proof. That is given us in the case of Barnabas. At the time when, as some would have us believe, the early Church was attempting a primitive Socialism, Barnabas appears as a man of wealth. No suggestion is made that his riches were an offence to Christian ideals.

¹ Cf. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 191.

In a day when the practice of having all things in common might have led men to regard a rich man who kept his possessions as less than Christian, there is clear proof that he could keep them, if that were his mind, and that seemed to be his duty. His gift of them was an act of grace in a time of need, not a denuding of himself of what it was wrong to possess. Peter's words to Ananias, "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (Acts v. 4), form the obvious comment on the situation. They declare that Christian men may amass means, may hold property, and may use it in a Christian liberty.

Why have such conclusions as we have disallowed seemed so convincing and been so persistent? The reason lies in the single fact that Christ's teaching has been misread through a deeply rooted obsession. Men have failed to see that what Christ condemned was not riches, but covetousness and the misuse of riches. Covetousness is the craving for more, and still more, until the getting of riches becomes the controlling passion of the heart. Covetousness looks out with the eyes of envy upon the possessions of others. It seduces a man to acquire wealth at the cost of honesty and honour. But covetousness, in Christ's teaching, may be a passion of the poor as much as of the rich. It is questionable whether the rich

or the poor are the more tempted by it. Jesus is always scathingly stern in His rebuke of covetousness whether in the rich or in the poor. It is one of the leading counts in His indictment of the Pharisees. But He is equally severe when He finds covetousness among the poor. When a certain man came to Him asking Him to speak to his brother, whom he charged with defrauding him of his portion, Jesus turned upon him with the question, "Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" Then He added, speaking to a poor, and perhaps injured, man, "Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke xii. 14, 15). Equally severe is Jesus on any misuse of any kind of wealth. Plainly nothing in Christ's life or teaching condemns wealth, but He condemns that passion of covetousness which is a despiritualising sin in both rich and poor, and he condemns the misuse of wealth in the same way as He condemns the misuse of any other talent or opportunity. Jesus regarded wealth as a condition in which a Christian might find himself. In that state of life he might faithfully serve God, and attain the highest rank in Christian character. There is no finer character than that of the man who continues simple and self-controlled in his tastes, lowly in his temper, and generous in his dealing, amidst great possessions.

II

When we are settled in our minds that Jesus sanctioned the acquisition and possession of riches we are led on to ask how He regarded them in relation to His social ideal. From the point of view of the kingdom of God how are we to consider the getting and the keeping, the spending and the using of wealth? Is it possible to sum up Christ's teaching in any broad and sufficient way?

In the first place it is clear that Jesus regarded riches as a *stewardship*. That is His ruling thought. A man's wealth must be administered not for his own ease or pleasure, or for any selfish end, but for the highest purposes he can perceive. No man must think that his wealth has been given to him in absolute ownership. The man who will say to himself, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry," will be reminded of the depths of his folly. He will be reminded that life is so uncertain, and possession so fleeting, and the account a man must give so strict, that no one but a fool will so speak with himself. He will be taught that a man's true life does not consist in a self-willed enjoyment of abundant possessions. In Christ's teaching every talent is to be used in the Master's service. Wealth is only one of the least important of our possessions. The stewardship of the mysteries of God (1 Cor.

iv. 1), and the stewardship of the manifold grace of God (1 Pet. iv. 1), must observe the same law as the stewardship of riches. For that reason Jesus never called upon men to divide their wealth with others. What He did urge and constantly implied was that no man should consider his wealth, of any kind, as his own. He ought to think of it as a gift, and a possession, and a talent, which he can use, and for which he will be called to account. The world's well-being and progress depend on every man using his talents wisely. Jesus, therefore, did not think it one whit more undesirable, or in any way unjust, for one man to be richer than another, than for another man to be taller than another. What He did teach was that all our possessions of body, of mind, of soul, and of worldly wealth, constitute a stewardship of which a man must give an account.

It is not difficult to gather from the teaching of Christ the chief methods in which this stewardship can be practised. One of these is by almsgiving. Jesus did not give a high place to almsgiving. In the social ideal He is creating, when the kingdom of God, "which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," has come, and when every man has attained a moral character, there will be little need for almsgiving. Nothing is more admirable than the way in which those, who have been reduced to poverty and the need of

charity, rise out of that state, in a brief period, when they are Christian in character. The widow's children, brought up in the fear of the Lord, always come to affluence. When both poor and rich are living the Christian life, neither will have a large inter-relation of charity. Yet we cannot conceive of a world in which there will not be some need of almsgiving, especially in its finer forms. In a world like ours there will always be misfortune, unexpected and undeserved distress, sickness, and sorrow, and death, and always the need of the kindness, the help, and the sympathy of others. "The poor ye have always with you," is not to be read as a justification of a state of poverty which should continue. But it implies the truth that almsgiving will always have a place. No possible state can ever make the weaker and more disadvantaged in life independent of the help of the stronger and abler. It is, therefore, in this failure in almsgiving that we find one of Christ's most severe condemnations. In the parable of the last judgment the sentence of exclusion was passed upon those who had not remembered the need of the poor, the stranger, the prisoner, the naked, and the sick. Yet almsgiving is the lowest in the scale of the virtues of stewardship. It is the most to be feared for its effect on the character both of giver and receiver. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" is one

saying, disclosing Christ's mind on the peril of receiving charity. "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" is His other saying, declaring how subtle a danger lurks in our self-exalting moods of generosity.

A second method of discharging the stewardship of riches is by a ministry to the beauty and happiness of life. It is difficult to see, as has been already urged, how some of the higher interests of life, about whose necessity and value men are not agreed, can be promoted apart from private property. This has been felt so keenly by some of the more thoughtful social reformers that they have begun to declare that a large measure of private property must be allowed. It is quite clear that many of the adornments of life, which make up the happiness of some men, could not receive the sanction of a committee of public control, and could not expect either the support or the endowment of the State. We get a pregnant picture of that truth in the incident at the supper in the home of Bethany. When Mary broke her alabaster box of precious ointment over the head of Jesus, the question, based upon a seemingly justified moral indignation, was publicly asked, "To what purpose is this waste?" But that is precisely the question which would be asked in a social state about some act of devotion or of faith, which seemed to waste a large sum of

the common property of the State. Quite apart from the fact that many of these services would not be possible to the man who has been compelled to give his hours of toil to the approved work of the State, there lies the further fact that they can be carried out only by the man who is willing to sacrifice both himself and his possessions upon them. When Jesus taught us that men do not live by bread alone, when He was made glad by the feast of Matthew who bade many to meet Him, when He accepted the gift of the costly spikenard and called it a deed of beauty, when He saw the rich and the poor casting in their gifts to the treasury, and commended the sacrifice, He taught us not only the rightfulness of possessing wealth, but its duty to minister to the beauty and the gladness of life.

A third method of discharging this stewardship is by the faithful employment of our wealth in the daily work and business of the world. Here Christ's teaching has been a good deal overlooked. Living as He did in the midst of a commercial community He derived the scenery of many of his parables from its customs. Some of these descriptions are mere accessories to the framework of the parable. But in many others He uses the obvious wisdom and justice of the business world to enforce the truth that a man must use his wealth to carry on the work of daily life. The

man who hid his master's talent in the earth, and the husbandmen who refused to reckon with their lord, the servants who were drunken in their master's absence, that other servant who was merciless to his fellow, are all condemned because they have failed in their daily work and business. In the same way all who hoard their wealth without employing it in the world's business, and all who spend it wastefully and extravagantly upon themselves, are condemned for failure in their stewardship. We usually fasten our eyes on how men get their money, or how they spend it. Jesus has as keen a glance for their manner of using it. Whatever be a man's wealth, whether it be in gold, or in land, or in gifts of mind, or in the endowments of nature, or whether it be only in the labour of his hands, of that he is a steward, and its highest exercise is in the daily work and business of the world. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." A keen scrutiny of life will disclose this truth that here most of us have been least faithful in the stewardship of our peculiar wealth.

In the second place, Jesus regarded riches, when honestly and honourably gained, as an *achievement*. Of course, whether it be riches or poverty, when either state is reached through dishonesty or dishonour, it is equally condemned by Christ. Some of His most scalding sayings in condemnation

of rich Scribes and Pharisees, are not directed against their wealth, but against their ill-gotten gain. The hardest words in the severe Epistle of James are spoken against those whose riches have been wrung out of the underpaid poor. Here, no doubt, many of the rich in every generation, as in our own, fall under Christ's severe rebuke. No man can amass ample wealth while his employees are toiling under disheartening conditions, and at the minimum wage their hunger compels them to accept, without receiving condemnation from the whole sweep of the teaching of Christ. No man can be consciously investing thousands of pounds out of the profits of his business while he declares that he cannot give his employees another shilling a week except by endangering his profits altogether, without an even severer condemnation. He is lying to the Holy Ghost. We can be quite sure that not only the austere-minded James, but the patient Christ, would condemn any amassing of wealth which could have been shared with others. He would not have accepted ample gifts for the education of the masses, and the improvement of their moral and intellectual condition, as any discharge of the obligation of riches. The one and only discharge for the man, growing in wealth by the labour of others, is to share it with them, and to use it in caring for

them beyond the hours in which they serve him.

But we must not quote Christ's condemnation of ill-gotten and unjustly hoarded gains as a condemnation of wealth. Jesus did not esteem the getting of wealth as a high end in life. All men in Christendom agree with Him. Burns's counsel,

"To gather gear by every wile
That's justified by honour,"

would not be condemned by Him. But He would rather tell us that we should not be too eager about gathering gear at all. Yet, as He indicated in the parable of the Talents and its companion parable of the Pounds, riches may be an entirely honourable achievement. The man who was given five talents, and by his trading gained five talents more, is commended as a good and faithful servant. The man who did nothing with his single talent and gained nothing by it, is condemned as wicked and slothful. Christ closes His parable with the statement, which He repeated on more than one occasion, of the law of the increase of riches. "Unto every one that hath it shall be given: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath, shall be taken away" (Matt. xxv. 29). It must be noted that this law of increase is not a law Christ has made, but a law which He observed. It acts both in the world of nature and the world

of spirit. It must be further marked that it is a law, not merely of arbitrary increase, but of use. It is true only in the case of the man who makes use of what he possesses, whether it be the muscles of his arm, or the cells of his brain, or the money in his pocket. Christ's statement of it sets down both the loss and the gain which, in the simplest justice, each man must expect according to his faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Riches is the achievement. Poverty is the penalty.

The reason why Jesus regarded wealth as an achievement was not simply that it is a possible good in itself. It was because behind the honest achievement of wealth there lie high ethical qualities — industry, fidelity, foresight, careful attention to details, self-denial, and a wise regard to a man's spending and pleasuring. No man can achieve riches without a constant self-control, a careful prudence, and a costly observance of the virtues which all men find difficult. Indeed, Jesus regarded the management of riches as a test of a man's character and a means of qualifying him for receiving higher blessing. In the difficult parable of the unjust steward there is much about which we are uncertain. But its conclusion is perfectly clear. When Jesus says, "If, therefore, ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful

in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own ?, " (Luke xvi. 11, 12), He is declaring that the man who does not wisely administer the wealth of this world, and does not use its opportunities, cannot receive either the wealth of the world that is visible, or the riches of character which are eternal. That is to say, the achievement of truth and purity, even of faith and love, are bound up with his achievement in the daily business of life. The man who is dishonest in his business and unjust in his dealings, whether he be an employer or an employee, shuts the door of the kingdom of God upon himself. But the man who practises the ethical virtues and graces by which he may achieve wealth in this world, so educates and disciplines himself as to be receptive of the eternal inheritance. As a matter of historic fact there is no finer character than the upright and honourable business man.

But Jesus regarded wealth not only as a stewardship and an achievement but as a *peril*. That was the aspect of wealth about which He spoke most frequently, most explicitly, and with the keenest sense of alarm. He kept ever in view its seductive temptations. His words to men who have yielded, or are yielding, to the selfish enjoyment of riches are stern, abrupt, unforgettable. In the parable of the rich fool Jesus makes every word cut like a lash. None of His hearers were so deeply stung to

resentment as the covetous who felt the darts of His condemnation, and no others were so malicious in their derision. The warnings which men have picked out because of their unbending rigour, are all inspired by this keen sense of the perils of possession. In one parable which has impressed the imagination of all ages, Christ gives this truth a definite exposition. In His picture of the rich man who allowed Lazarus to lie untended at his gate, He declares that riches and the power to gratify every wish, and to indulge in selfish splendour, and in soft luxury, chill the compassions, blind the eyes, and harden the heart, so that the leper in his need, with the dogs licking his sores, is not even seen by the rich man as he passes from his feast. The deeper reason behind the demand to the rich young ruler lies also in this subtle degradation and de-spiritualising effect of wealth. We should not need to learn this truth of the peril of wealth. We know that the vices of the rich are indolence, extravagance, heedlessness of the poor, contempt of the unsuccessful, and that insolent highmindedness which is removed, as far as pole from pole, from the meekness and gentleness of Christ. We know how often wealth creates pride, vulgarity, callous cruelty, and self-will. We have marked it desecrate the soul until nothing is left in a man's desires but a hunger for earthly gratifications. The apostle set it

down succinctly when he wrote, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in perdition." The histories of the children of the rich are as sad as those of the very poor, and they prove how short-sighted men are who crave to amass riches. As Ruskin has said, "They should be called our illth and not our wealth." We can see why Jesus, although He taught that possessions are a stewardship, and wealth when honourably gained is an achievement, spoke most solemnly of their peril. If we will look at wealth with Christ's eyes, we shall be more inclined to the poverty we dread, than to the riches which, along with so many more, we often denounce, and so persistently covet.

CHAPTER VI

THE SOURCES OF POVERTY

WHEN we have reached an ethical justification of the possession of wealth, and have outlined the modes of its getting and spending, we are ready to consider the problems of poverty, and to enter upon the more complex questions which arise in the relationships of the rich to the poor. Our first inquiry is into the sources of poverty.

I

Poverty is one of the most hazily conceived of all the common terms used in this inquiry. Before we can enter upon any discussion of either its sources or its remedies, we must make some distinctions, and reach some clear understanding of what we mean by the word. The first distinction is, that the problems of poverty must be distinguished from the problems of capital and labour. The masses of men who are demanding a larger wage and an ampler leisure base their demand, not upon their poverty, but upon justice. Yet there is a constant appeal to the state of the poor, and a disregard of the element of justice, because

the appeal to poverty is poignant and effective, while the argument from justice is not always convincing. Mr Charles Booth sets the matter in clear light. "The question of those who actually suffer from poverty should be considered separately from that of the true working classes, whose desire for a larger share of wealth is of a different character. It is the plan of agitators, and the way of sensational writers, to confound the two in one, to talk of 'starving millions' and to tack on the thousands of the working classes to the tens or hundreds of distressed. Against this method I protest. To confound these essentially distinct problems is to make the solution of both impossible. It is not by welding distress and aspiration that any good can be done."¹ The question of poverty touches the relationship of capital and labour only at one point. That is at the contention that if no one were allowed to become rich, and if there were equality of distribution, poverty would pass away. That contention we shall consider again.

The second distinction to be made is between poverty and poverty. What is poverty? is the question all investigators ask, but find it difficult to answer. No agreement can be reached until some standard is determined. Mr Charles Booth in his massive volumes distributed the people into

¹ *Life and Labour in London*, vol. i. p. 155.

six classes—A and B, C and D, E and F. Those in A and B he called “the very poor.” These had either an insufficient wage to maintain life adequately or they made such use of their wage as to bring them to destitution. He estimated the population of London, in 1900, to be 4,309,000. The numbers in classes A and B were 354,444 or 8·4 per cent. of the population. In classes C and D he placed “the poor.” These classes embraced those who would have been comfortable had they practised economy, but from various causes, some of them not blameworthy, they were in constant peril of drifting into the classes of “the very poor,” and they were seldom much above the poverty line. In these classes C and D he estimated the numbers as 938,293 or 22·3 per cent. of the population. Deducting some 67,000 loafers and criminals (it is not easy to see how this seemingly small number was arrived at, or how the “loafer” was ascertained) he estimated the poor in London as 29·8 per cent. of the population.¹

Mr B. S. Rowntree made a similar investigation into the poverty of York. Because the area is smaller than that overtaken in Mr Booth’s epoch-making seventeen volumes there is more personal detail, and more theory and suggestion. Mr Rowntree made a different classification of poverty,

¹ *Life and Labour in London*, vol. ii. Cf. also, for a condensed statement, vol. xvii, p. 9.

and perhaps, because it attempted less, it is of more value. He distinguished between "primary poverty" and "secondary poverty."¹ The families living in primary poverty are those "whose total earnings are insufficient to obtain the minimum necessities for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency." The families living in secondary poverty are those "whose total earnings would be sufficient for the maintenance of merely physical efficiency, were it not that some portion of it is absorbed by other expenditure, either useful or wasteful." Mr Rowntree's figures seem to warrant the same conclusion as that reached by Mr Booth. In the classes A and B and C the percentage of poor is 28·9. But as he has included in the class C, which embraces 20·7 per cent. of the population, families whose average earnings are 26s. 7d. per week, it is doubtful whether his figures can be compared with Mr Booth's. The impression left on the mind is that the poverty of York and of similar towns, cannot be helpfully compared with the poverty of London.

Now, no one will care to make any confident criticism of the figures of so supremely careful and so unfailingly wise an investigator as Mr Booth. Nor will anyone be willing to pay the statistics of Mr Rowntree anything but respect. Yet it must be remarked that there is no secure

¹ *Poverty, A Study of Town Life*, pp. 86-87. *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 47, 60.

conclusion from their figures to the state of the whole country. It must be remembered that the condition of the poor in London is certainly more extreme than that of the poor elsewhere. The larger the city is, the greater is its poverty. London is the sink into which much of the poverty and shiftlessness and crime of the whole land continually drains. But the more serious error seems to be that Mr Booth's percentages are not quite fair, even for London. He has taken the dark poverty zone of the city and set its numbers against the census figures for the London of a limited area. In no other inquiry would the population of London be estimated merely at 4,309,000. Official London is not real London. Mr Booth's figures for the poor should have been set against the much larger population of Greater London, lying far beyond the survey of its County Council. Were we to make up the percentage of the poor in suburban London by itself, the figures would shrink to a mere moiety of the whole. The population of that Greater London, which has in some parts almost no poor at all, is returned in 1901 at 6,581,402. Were the London poor to be set against this larger population, as in fairness should be done, the percentage would be greatly reduced.

This criticism may be supported by what may be called the broad facts elsewhere. The last census of the city of Glasgow declared its population to

slightly exceed a million of people. On Mr Booth's computation there should be about 300,000 people who are really poor, either in destitution constantly or falling into it continually. But no one who knows Glasgow, as I do in every street of it, and in some of its admittedly most crowded and drunken and poverty-stricken quarters, would accept such figures for a moment. They will come to think with me that the classification of London is not a guide to the classification elsewhere. They will be more inclined to accept Mr Rowntree's less detailed classification of "primary" and of "secondary" poverty.

This criticism on the statistics of these two masters of the subject must not be read as minimising either the extent or the urgency of the problems of poverty. There is always the *intensive* meaning of destitution, and the stage above it. We must remember that what may be poverty in one place is not poverty in another; that wages and earnings and purchasing power are very different things; that families differ in their numbers and in their needs and in their methods of management; that some of the younger members of a family may largely increase its income, while others are a drain upon it. It is difficult not only to attain a definition of poverty, but also to reach a clear conception of its meaning. Both Mr Booth and Mr Rowntree recognise that it is only those who

live among the poor, and acquire their confidence, who can describe, with any accuracy, what poverty is. For three periods Mr Booth lived in the midst of the poor, and the effect of that closer knowledge can be seen in the invaluable conclusions and suggestions of his closing volume. A devoted city missionary, or deaconess, is a better witness for the extent and meaning of poverty, than the most scrupulous investigator. But for our purpose here we need not canvass the details of "the arithmetic of woe." We can agree that poverty, in the sense of destitution, which involves an insufficiency of food and clothing, of shelter and the means of cleanliness, ought not to be allowed to continue, whatever be its sources, or whatever methods we may be compelled to adopt for its abolition.

A third distinction remains. That is, that much that is labelled poverty ought not to be classed as poverty at all. To use Mr Rowntree's terms, there is not only a "primary" and a "secondary" but a "tertiary" poverty. This tertiary poverty has been frequently included in the lists of those whom we are asked to pity.¹ It is the condition

¹ Mr Chiozza Money, in *Riches and Poverty*, classifies incomes as follows: Rich = 1,250,000, Comfortable = 3,750,000, Poor = 38,000,000. One sees at a glance the besetting sin of the statistician, and when one learns that all with an income of less than £160 a year are included among these "poor," the absurdity of the classification is apparent. The figures I give on page 131 prove how misleading

of those who are working for a weekly wage, and are largely dependent for their comfort upon the constancy of their employment. But these wage-earners would resent, deeply and justly, their classification among "the poor." Everyone is aware of large families brought up in the homes of these so-called poor who learned cheerfully through their condition of life the virtues of economy, self-denial, helpfulness, and sympathy. They kept a noble independence, so that they became the moral salt of the community. It was of these that Burns was thinking when he wrote—

"Is there for honest poverty
Wha hangs his heid for a' that?
The coward knave, we pass him by,
We daur be puir for a' that."

It will be a pity if our unbalanced humanitarians should teach us, or them, to think of their condition with anything but a moral pride.

A modern writer,¹ whose insight on questions of economics is admirable, has declared that many of these poor are content with their lot, only because habit has dulled their minds to its hardships, or because charity ekes out their means, or because they find a solace for their narrow

and unmeaning such a classification is. Burke's robust commonsense called that manner of speaking a trifling with a condition of mankind. Chalmers indignantly repelled every attempt to pity and to pauperise the industrious wage-earner.

¹ D. H. Macgregor, *The Evolution of Industry*, pp. 250-251.

lives within their homes. This is not accurate of the great mass even of the poor. It is singularly unjust to those who are in "tertiary" poverty. He is entirely mistaken when he sets down what he calls "the apathy of the poor" to the power of habit and a dependence on charity. But it is true, and of more significance than the writer seems to think, that they find a solace not only for the sterner facts of life but for those sorrows that touch us all, in whatsoever state we are, in the duties and affections of home. That is entirely as it should be. Mr Charles Booth wrote with a fine discernment, after living among the poor and coming into close touch with their conditions, "An analysis of the elements of happiness would hardly be in place here. But it may be remarked that neither poverty nor wealth has much part in it. The main conditions of human happiness I believe to be work and affection, and he who works for those he loves, fulfils these conditions."¹ In closing his estimate he adds, "The simple, natural, lives of working class people tend to their own and their children's happiness, more than the artificial, complicated existence of the rich." It is this large class against whose inclusion among "the poor" that I make protest. They are living in the condition of life which Christ commends, in which He himself lived with a radiant peace,

¹ *Life and Labour in London*, p. 131 (note). Cf. also p. 160.

and by which the finest traits of character are attained. They live their lives in a frugality which is both strengthening and purifying. They attain self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control. They are carried to their graves in honour. What higher good can a human life attain ?

II

We now pass on to inquire into the sources of this poverty which we have so defined, *i.e.* this primary and secondary poverty. In any summing up of these sources we are all inclined to lay emphasis on the causes which impress us most. I have chosen the order of their comparative importance as they impress me. That order will be accepted by most who live among the poor, and it is supported by the details and the evidence given both by Mr Booth and Mr Rowntree.

The first source of poverty is *drink, and all drink implies*. When we remember that the annual amount spent on alcohol is over £150,000,000, and that of this sum over £100,000,000 comes out of the earnings of the working classes, no man can deny that this is a fruitful cause of poverty. When we add to the sum spent on liquor itself, the loss of days of labour, the drain on the health and strength of the members of the family, the wastage of the economic forces employed in the traffic, the heavy charge for police and reformatories and

hospitals, and the wholly incalculable cost of the vices which the use of alcohol creates and stimulates, there is an annual loss whose millions no man can compute. The wages of the working classes are estimated as about £900,000,000 a year. What can there be but poverty, when at least one-ninth of the weekly earnings is spent in drink, and as much more is lost or wasted through the effects of the drinking habits of the people? If this money were spent otherwise it would give every family a comfortable home over their heads, and one whole week's generous supply of food upon their tables. When we remember that the drink curse lies upon women as much as upon men we receive an impression of the loss and waste, not to speak of the sadder consequences, which no statistics can engross. It is a strange fact that while labour leaders grow eloquent over the inadequate share of the worker, and draw piteous pictures of his condition, only a few of them ever lift their voices to denounce the drinking habits of the people, or to urge upon them that total abstinence which would be both their health and their wealth. If the wage-earners drank less, or, better still, if they ceased to drink at all, much of the poverty and of the disease and crime it breeds would be unknown.

But we are sometimes told by these speakers that poverty is the cause of drinking and drunken-

ness, as though there were no drinking or drunkenness among the rich and the comfortable. That statement is made as an excuse for drunkenness among the poor, and as a reason why their drinking should not be blamed. But while it is true that poverty and unemployment lead men to indulgence in alcohol, it is not true, in the same sense, as that indulgence in alcohol leads to poverty and unemployment. The man's indulgence in strong drink quickly and inevitably renders him incompetent. But it does not follow that because a man's wages are small, or he is out of work, or lives in a mean street, he must go and get drunk. The connection between vice and poverty is necessary. The connection between poverty and vice is avoidable. It is also inexcusable. Much of the cheap talk, which seems to excuse drunkenness in the poor, is heard only because so many think that a man who suffers from poverty should be allowed to console himself with a curse.

A second cause of poverty is *improvidence, in which we include waste, mismanagement, and, the darkest moral evil of all, betting and gambling.*¹ It

¹ This improvidence is seen in reckless spending when a flush of money, such as some small legacy, comes into the possession of the more easy minded, in the extravagant displays on the household occasions of joy or sorrow, and especially in the early marriages, for which no provision is made. Young couples often begin in debt, and the loss of even a week's wage sends them to the pawn-shop. But this question of marriage is more complex than the mere economist understands.

is not easy to bring home to some minds the duty of prudential saving. For the question is at once asked, "What can be saved out of 21s. a week?" But it must be noted that the question is not, "How much can be saved?" as "How much need not be spent foolishly and wastefully?" Yet it must be remembered that there are numberless cases where thrift has succeeded in saving enough out of a scanty wage, to tide over a period of sickness, and to keep the wolf from the door in a time of industrial hardness. The late Miss Octavia Hill, and her coadjutor, Miss Cons, along with that wise expert in the condition of the poor, Miss Margaret Loane, unite in their testimony that the comfort and cleanliness of the home, and the security of the family in time of trouble are not dependent on the largeness of the wage-earner's income. The truth is, as every mission worker knows, that numbers of those who belong to the secondary poor, and as many who fall into the state of the primary poor in the end, have large weekly wages. But they will drink, and they will spend heedlessly, and they will gamble. They choose to live from hand to mouth. When they are out of work, as they often are, because of their habits, they are in poverty next morning. A consideration of the savings of the wage-earning classes will convince every open mind that, were all the people to be provident, at least fifty per

cent. of the poverty which is a drain on the resources of the State, and a burden on the minds of men would pass away. I set down here an extract from the report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies for August 1912. It must be noted that the report, so far as it concerns the Savings Banks declares their state only as at 31st December 1910. A large increase has taken place since that date.¹

	NUMBER OF MEMBERS.	FUNDS.
Building Societies	638,749	£77,261,381
Friendly Societies, etc. . . .	14,507,963	62,866,002
Co-operative Societies	2,880,979	63,316,460
Trades Union Acts,	2,017,656	5,925,358
Workmen's Compensation Schemes (under Workmen's Compensation Act)	68,140	83,781
Friends of Labour Loan Societies (under Loan Societies Act) . .	31,940	249,367
Total Registered Provident Societies	20,145,427	£209,702,349
	DEPOSITORS.	DEPOSITS.
Railway Savings Banks	69,455	£6,575,945
Trustee Savings Banks (including investments in stock and special investment accounts)	1,827,460	65,834,706
Post Office Savings Bank (including investments in stock)	8,371,789	192,042,083
	<u>10,268,704</u>	<u>£264,452,734</u>
Grand total	<u>30,414,131</u>	<u>£474,155,083</u>

¹ I am indebted to Mr Robert Corbet, Joint-Actuary of the National Security Savings Bank, Glasgow, for these figures, and for other most competent evidence on the finance of the poor.

It is most likely that many of these 30,000,000 of investors are in more than one society, and a number must be both Savings Bank depositors and members of other societies. Yet when we make any deduction we think justified, we are left with undoubted proof that the wage-earning classes have the power to be provident, and have so largely exercised it as to be justly indignant at being classed among the poor. It must be remembered that these depositors represent a much larger number of people. In the 45,000,000 of our population, women and children are included, who are seldom depositors or members of provident societies. Perhaps the most significant fact of the foregoing figures is that the 10,000,000 of depositors in the Savings Banks average the sum of £26, 8s. per head. That indicates what can be done by thrift.

But thrift is objected to on the ground that it is bad ethics and worse economics. The case against thrift has been put in a recently published book on *The Fallacy of Saving*. By that writer it is denounced on two grounds. One is that thrift is practised only at the cost of health, or of strength, or of the simple and necessary joys of life. The other ground is that thrift withdraws from circulation what ought to be freely expended in employing labour and in fructifying the wealth of the State. Both of these grounds are baseless.

Thrift is not parsimony. There may be cases where men deny themselves the necessities and pleasures of life to practise parsimony. But they are so rare as to make it ludicrous to mention them. All workers among the poor know that the thrifty, even when their savings have been spared from small wages, are better fed, better clothed, and better housed, than those who spend up to their last penny. The truth is that the indispensable necessities and the simple joys of life are not costly. Vice and wilfulness are the costly and extravagant things.

Nor is there any reason in the contention that the thrifty are storing up what ought to be in circulation and use. The miser who puts his money in a stocking has died out. The thrifty put their money in a bank, or in some small investment, where it helps to carry on the work of the world. It is more wisely used in being added to the requisite capital, without which neither work can be given nor wages paid, than in being spent wholly for the user's pleasure.

Apart from these truths the denunciation of thrift leaves out of account its ethical value. Thrift cultivates character. It calls for method, order, self-denial, and self-sacrifice. It demands and fixes the habits of regularity, punctuality, and steadfastness. It gives a sense of honourable independence. Thrift is thriving, in every sense

of the word. Even if it sometimes hardens into an unlovely austerity, it is commendable for other moral issues, and for its sequence of undoubted good. We can mark that among the French peasantry, the most thrifty in the world, where poverty and many forms of crime are almost unknown. But the point to note is, that whether the wage-earners are able to practise saving or not, they are called upon to be provident in their spending, and to abstain from waste and gambling, with this sure issue that all secondary poverty would cease, and vastly fewer slip down into the stratum of the primary poor.

The third cause of poverty is *sloth*. Every employer of labour, and every social inquirer, knows that one part of the problem of poverty is concerned with the unemployable who will not work. There are numbers of men who will slouch through a long day depending on occasional work and chance gains. They will not bend their back to a heavy burden, or toil continuously with a tool. They will not discharge punctually, regularly, and persistently any exacting labour. They are as slothful as the idle rich. The books of every society, whether that of the Charity Organisation Society, or of a Trades Union, will give the cases of loafers and spungers, who will haunt hotel doors and wait at quays and railway stations for a chance catch, but they will not work.

There is a still lower class who live by their wives' crime and their own, but will not set their hands to a steady day's labour. Beyond this number of wilful idlers there is a much larger class of men who are termed "work-shy." They were "work-shy" in their youth, and did not learn their trade properly. They are among the first to be discharged because they are late in the morning, or because they skulk whenever the foreman's back is turned. They will take days off for loafing on any pretext, however much the work they are on calls for dispatch. All these classes of men, with their dependants, continually fall into the ranks of the poor. Christian ethics in their case has a severe condemnation. In words which are sometimes applied to the idle rich, but ought also to be applied to the idle poor, "If any work not, neither shall he eat." They are the despair both of philanthropists and economists. Men so compassionate as Mr Booth fall back upon a suggestion of segregation, with compulsory toil, for those who seem to be incurable victims of sloth.¹

Could we dry up these three sources of poverty—drink, improvidence, and sloth—the percentage left could be dealt with effectively by amendments to our present laws. It could be coped with, in a large measure, by the large number of private agencies who form a salvage corps among

¹ Cf. *Life and Labour in London*, vol. i., p. 154.

the poor. Indeed, many of these philanthropic societies would find their occupation gone. Yet nothing is more strange than the ignoring of these sources of poverty by a certain calibre of economist. Mr Chiozza Money writes,¹ "The unduly small share of the national dividend possessed by the poor is the source of a stream of moral and physical evil, which, mingling with the waters of death, which descend from the high levels of luxury, produces effects, whose causation is only obscure, as long as we neglect the study of the error of distribution." Every one who lives among the poor and has studied the effects of the inequality of distribution, which the present writer does not wish to treat lightly, comes to the conclusion that its effects are small compared to "the stream of moral and physical evil," which flows from drink, improvidence, and sloth.²

¹ *Riches and Poverty*, p. 152.

² Cf. Poor Law Commission Report, Appendix, vol. xxxii. pp. 75-81, for the report of Herr Otto Kellerhals on the industrial farms of Witzwyl, with its auxiliaries of Nusschhof and Tannenhof, in Switzerland. The incomparable devotion and practical genius of the director has brought the industrial farm within measurable distance of paying its expenses, but that has been attained only by a large admixture of paid labour. The moral results, as Herr Kellerhals regretfully admits, have not been so satisfactory, although it must be remembered that he is dealing with the darkest and most hopeless dredge of the stream which flows from drink and improvidence and sloth. He points out that these are the three chief sources not only of poverty, but of crime, and Mr Charles Booth again and again enforces that fact.

III

Let us come now to other and different sources. The first of these is *incompetence*. There are those who are physically and mentally unfit for the full burden of life. There are the stunted and deformed, and the men and women of meagre intelligence. There are those smaller numbers who are handicapped by some infirmity. Yet these are not a large class, and it is on record, as well as a matter of observation, that they do not so frequently fall into the ranks of the very poor. The blind are amazingly full of resource. The lame are usually men and women of remarkable activity of mind. Deaf mutes are seldom found among the helpless poor. Even those who are more piteously hindered, and those whose standard of intelligence is low, are often found filling humble offices and discharging lesser duties with fidelity and punctuality. The numbers of the incompetent, in this way, are not a large element in the problem. They do not present the difficulty, vexing and tormenting, of the morally incompetent whose case we have considered. It is evident that life should be made easy for them, and that is not a matter of much difficulty. We do not require any change in our social order, or any drastic reform in our laws, to prevent the poverty of those unable to stand in the ranks of the battle of life. "We then that are

strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak " contains the statement of the duty, and the sanction for it.

Another class of these blameless poor are those *who suffer from misfortune*. The illness, or the death, of the breadwinner, a new custom in business, a new fashion in materials or in the mode of their manufacture, an invention of more efficient machinery, a business failure, the removal of an industry from one district to another, a cycle of lessened industry after a boom, brings thousands to the verge of destitution, unless they have practised the ethical virtues of sobriety, providence, and energy. One of the special causes of misfortune in modern life is old age. Most of the wage-earners rise out of poverty between the ages of fifteen and forty-five. During these thirty years, if there is no moral fault, the family does not sink into the ranks of the poor. But after forty-five, especially where the younger members marry early or are heedless of the older, there is often a severe struggle. That struggle is, in actual fact, greatly mitigated by the providence of workmen themselves, and by the care and help of sons and daughters. Were that self-help and self-denial to be universal, the poverty bred by misfortune would be reduced to an easily manageable residuum. Recent legislation dealing with sickness, unemployment, and old age

has almost eliminated this source of poverty altogether.

The last source is to be found in the *economic conditions of modern life*. We have swollen cities with a closely packed labouring population. We have large and complex industries in which the workers number thousands, and remain almost unknown to each other. We have masses of unskilled workers who are dependent upon a weekly wage with no security of employment. We have an increasing army of women who are entering every sphere of labour, except that of heavy muscular toil. All of these are no longer in personal touch with their employers. Even with the managers and foremen they are often no more than numbers on the roll. The real employer is sometimes a syndicate, or a body of shareholders, who know nothing about the conditions of their labour. They may never have seen the warehouse, or foundry, or factory whose capital they provide. This industrial system requires a reservoir of labour, from which it can draw at will, and into which the surplus stock of labour drains when work is scarce, to remain unemployed until required again. It also involves a keen competition, which has its own place and value. But prices must be cut at times to the lowest possible percentage. Although large profits are made in many cases there are always small and unsuccessful businesses,

and these are driven to cheapen the cost of production, and to pay as little as possible for labour. This point must not have too much stress laid upon it. In the last half century the workmen's organisations have become so strong, that they have been able to compel the masters to increase the weekly wage, and to lessen the number of hours, and to improve the condition of their employees. Yet it is evident that these economic conditions tend to press hardly upon the poor, and they contribute a proportion of our poverty.

These economic conditions are complicated by movements in finance. A Wall Street gamble in stocks and shares, the exploiting of a new gold-field, or the manœuvring with a foreign market, a corner in cotton or in oil or in wheat, the setting up of a monopoly in some article of trade, or the forming of a combine, or trust, which may close down some of the mills in one town to concentrate them in another, all co-operate to produce poverty. From the other side of the situation the windy speech of a thoughtless agitator may lead the workers into an unwise course of action, or some short-sighted political demand may lay an arrest on the industry of the country.

How much of our poverty is due to these economic and financial conditions no one can say. It is

that source of poverty about whose extent, not only the figures, but the evidence to be gained by inquiry, are least reliable. Yet it is evident that our present industrial system, unless more largely controlled, and unless supplemented by other methods, must produce a certain amount of poverty. This only must be clearly said that nothing is more vain than to fix our eyes on any one source of poverty and, in a paroxysm of moral anger, or an overmastering and unreasoning compunction, deal merely with that. All these six sources contribute to the common stream, and until we dry up the springs the stream will flow. We are beginning to discover that Thomas Chalmers uttered a final word about the healing of poverty, although it has been so disastrously neglected. "If you wish to combat poverty, combat it in its first elements. If you confine your beneficence to the relief of actual poverty you do nothing. Dry up, if possible, the springs of poverty, for every attempt to intercept the running stream has totally failed." But it must not be forgotten that by the springs of poverty Chalmers meant entirely its moral and social causes. The economic causes were classed by his large sane mind after years of first-hand experience in dealing with the poverty of an industrial city as almost negligible if the moral and social sources could be dried up.

When we ask what Christian ethics has to say

about this drying up of the sources of poverty there is a two-fold answer. One part of the answer is that the whole problem will never be solved until the kingdom of God has been brought through its various agencies into the hearts and lives of men. Until that time we shall have the poor always with us. The second part of the answer, therefore, is that we must endeavour to order our social lives, and our individual conduct, so as not merely to help the poor, or to abolish the rich, and to deprive the well-doing of wise incentives, but to heal the sorrows of the poor and intercept the sources of their poverty. Jesus, therefore, would not approve of an attack on the possession of wealth. That is neither just ethics, nor wise economics. He would not sanction a law which would rob the individual of his liberty, even although it be a liberty to suffer, unless and until that liberty becomes a menace to the well-being of others. He would not distribute, as He did not distribute, frequent, or easy, or indiscriminate charity. He would endeavour to bring both the richer and the poorer, the employer and the employee into a new relationship to God and to each other. He would endeavour to lift men's eyes up to the higher issues of life. He would say both to capital and to labour, to rich and to poor, to master and to servant, to the man of many talents and the man of few, as to the man and the woman,—

“What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

We pass on, then, to consider the relationships which should exist between capital and labour as this is the most critical question in this wide field of human interest.

CHAPTER VII

THE OBLIGATIONS OF CAPITAL

THE possession of wealth is, as we have seen, an ethical necessity. The existence of poverty, in the true meaning of the word, is due to many causes but not to the fact that some men are rich. Indeed in economics it ought to be an axiom that the more wealth there is in anyone's hands the less poverty there will be, if the wealth is wisely administered. Its administration, not its division, is the crucial consideration. But the acute question of to-day is not the possession of wealth. It is the possession of capital, for the most extreme leveller is willing to leave some wealth in each man's hands. The charge is rather that when wealth becomes capital, and is placed at the command of a capitalist, it absorbs an undue share of the usufruct and bears less than its due proportion of public burdens, and thereby is the cause of poverty. Many thinkers no longer press this argument from the individual possession of wealth. But they affirm that justice is not done to the wage-earner, and thereby his life is impoverished, and, as a secondary effect, many of the class of wage-earners

drift into a poverty for which they are not to blame.

Now, wealth may be defined as that which satisfies the desires of men. Capital is the aggregation of the surplus of wealth, which has been saved from immediate use in satisfying men's desires, and is now set to the purpose of employing and rewarding labour. Capital employs labour by providing the materials and machineries with which the labourer works, securing the distribution of what is produced, and providing the labourer with his immediate reward, while capital waits for a subsequent return. In one sense the whole of the problems that arise between capital and labour can receive their solution only when we discern the obligations of capital. Even the unbreakable economic laws must be ethically justifiable. What is Christ's teaching on the obligations of capital ?

I

It is not easy to sum up Christ's teaching on this subject so as to produce universal conviction. There are two difficulties, often ignored, which bar the way to any swift or easy dealing with the teaching of Christ. The first is that Christ declined to deal with the question of capital and labour in any form in which it came before Him. He lived His life, by a set purpose, apart from it. The wrongs of the labourer and his condition under the

common law were more grievous then than now. They were so keenly felt that the times of Christ were seething with discontent. Numbers of men were banded together to prosecute violent methods of healing. It is clear that Simon Zelotes, who became an apostle, had been a member of an insurrectionary league. There is reason to believe that Barabbas, so popular with the crowd, was making a protest against the conditions of life in an oppressed time. The outbreaks under Theudas and Judas of Galilee, referred to in the address of Gamaliel, were also motivated by social unrest. But Christ kept himself studiously aloof from all these movements. He did not express sympathy either with their ideals or their modes of action. As we know he declined to enter into any question of a division of property. When we regard the trend of his life we perceive why he declined to interfere. He had something else and something more important to do. He had to finish a service which demanded the intensest concentration. To step aside in order to play the part of judge, or divider, or bread-king, or social reformer, would not only have imperilled his teaching, but would have hindered and prevented His own appointed work.

But beyond this simple reason, it is clear that he knew that when He had finished the work God had given Him to do, all the questions of social unrest

would find, in time, a rightful settlement. It was in fulfilment of that same method that Paul did not permit Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, to escape from his master. He ordered him to return to his bondage. We cannot think that such a direction was given because Paul had not realised the sacredness of individual freedom, and the right of every man to command the actions of his life. Paul saw that, at that stage, and under the circumstances of the Christian Church, to attack slavery and to encourage slaves to break the law, could issue only in suffering to many innocent people, prevent the gospel getting a fair hearing, and delay its work of promoting freedom and brotherhood. It is obvious that the exposition of the teaching of Christ on this problem is not so easy as some who quote His words seem to think.

The second difficulty is that Christ's teaching does not hold in its view the conditions of our modern life. That fact was inevitable. The Incarnation of Christ, and His life in historic times, compelled His message to have reference to His own time. In one sense the conditions of the times of Christ were worse than ours. There were greater evils and more manifest wrongs. There were arrogant rich and distressed and oppressed poor. There were the unemployed and the unemployable. There was neglect more callous than is possible in a Christian community.

But there were not the large cities with their complex industries. There were no mean streets with their sad succession of dark and unhealthy homes. There are signs of the casual labour class standing idle in the market-place, but there was not that swollen tide of broken and helpless and hopeless men who are continually being thrown upon the scrap-heap of humanity. There were few, if any, who spent an untrained boyhood, in some blind alley occupation, to reach manhood unequipped for any useful place in the social order. Neither was there that large reservoir of unemployed labour which our modern system of industry requires. The industrial war between manufacturer and manufacturer in one community was almost unknown. Its modern phases, with its world-wide commerce, and international relationships, and the intertwining of political ambitions with the problems of industry, were not on the horizon. It is quite clear then that care must be taken in applying any dictum quoted from Christ to this greatly changed industrial condition, and that the relationships of capital and labour cannot be settled by a sentence out of the gospels.

Beyond these two outstanding difficulties there are other differences which are almost of equal importance. There was not that gulf between the employer and the employee which is so prolific a source of heedless injustice. Nor was there

that instant dependence upon external sources of supply for the necessities of life. If the wage-earners of Christ's day had none of the modern luxuries they did not fall so quickly into destitution. More notable still is the fact, to which we shall recur again, that life was much simpler, and wants were fewer, and, therefore, the needs of the labourer were not so urgent then as now. At the same time the problems of Christ's day and of our own are the same at their root, and when we can grasp Christ's fundamental principles, we can outline the obligations of capital.

II

The first thing to be set down is that Christ did not abolish the capitalist. Nothing in His teaching leads to that conclusion. We cannot say that he would perpetuate the capitalist, or that He would sanction State ownership of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange, unless we can prove that either the perpetuation of the capitalist, or the introduction of State ownership, would promote the growth of Christian character. But this leads us to be assured, on two grounds, that Christ would not abolish the capitalist. There is not a shadow of reason for affirming that Christ had any conception of making men equal in their possessions. There is not a single sentence of His which implies

that any rich man should rid himself of his worldly goods, in fulfilment of the broad law of justice to men. The evidence from his teaching denies such a conception. When he gave to one man five talents, to another two, to another one, He was recording in His parable the fact that men never are, and never can be, equal in their endowments and capacities. They cannot be equal even in their opportunities. The demand for equality of opportunity, in a world like ours, is made only by the armchair economist who does not look out of his window. The one possible equality is equality before the law, and that is what is frequently meant by the demand of equality of opportunity. Even equality before the law must sometimes be infringed for the well-being of the community. To abolish the capitalist on the ground of equality is neither Christian ethic nor economic wisdom. The fact is that Christ did not care whether a man was a capitalist or a work-a-day labourer. His disciples clearly grasped His teaching in this important regard. The Epistle of James, as we have seen, contains the most severe condemnation of wealth, and the most unfaltering demand of justice for the labourer. Yet its writer says, "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass, he shall pass away." That exactly

reflects Christ's mind. To be high, or to be low, is not the vital matter to a Christian man. Contentment with one's lot, and fulfilment of its duties are cardinal principles of Jesus and His ideal. A man may therefore be a capitalist. He is entitled to resent any action which would condemn his wealth and denude him of it, even although he realises that the purpose of his deprivation is to share it with others who have less than he possesses.

The second ground on which Christ refuses sanction to abolish the capitalist is that he sees that abolition to be impossible. What is a capitalist ? He is not a man with so much money hidden in a napkin, or kept in some secret hoard, or lodged in the bank, or held in safe investments. These are the accidents, not the essentials of capitalism. A capitalist is a man who controls a large portion of the resources of nature, and of the forces and enterprises and labour of the world, and often receives an ample reward for his power of control. That control may be very slight on his part, and his reward may be not only ample but excessive. But these are diseases of capitalism, and are not distinctive of it. They are no more distinctive of capitalism, than shirking and skulking or the exaction of a unduly large wage in an employer's extremity, are distinctive of labour. It sometimes happens that the capitalist's control

may be most costly in time and strength and anxiety, and his reward may be the absolute loss of all his possessions. Many capitalists are among the most harassed and overdriven of men. The bankruptcy list in times of trade depression shows how precarious may be their reward.

The control of capital, and a certain reward for controlling it, can never be abolished. Were capital to be extinguished, and the State to become the sole owner and employer, there would still be magnates. There would be a phalanx of officials, or perhaps we should call them more accurately, a hierarchy of authorities, who would control the capital. They would give orders, exact obedience, and enjoy all the power of place and all the privileges and rewards of office. It is this certainty of the large numbers of persons in authority, of ascending grades, with unquestioned power, which gives pause to some of the more thoughtful Socialists and has become a terror to others who try to imagine the coming of a new industrial order. Members of School Boards, and the teachers under their charge, have had a foretaste of the absolute power of officialdom, when they have found themselves helpless under the arbitrary orders of "My Lords" of the Board of Education. The man who would be at the head of a national railway service would be a capitalist and a potentate, who would not envy Mr Rockefeller.

Even the controller of a tramway service, or the gardener who is set over the public parks, is virtually a capitalist. He enjoys a good income. He lives in a fine house. He has his motor supplied to him. He is paid unquestioning deference in every hour of the day. He directs the movement of large sums of capital, and he holds the destinies of a number of men in his hands. If some men urge that the capitalist is self-willed, and sometimes insolent, and that no one dare interfere with him, they have only to attempt even to get into the presence of any highly-placed official on the Nationalised Railways of Germany, or to criticise his conduct in public, to learn that the average capitalist is a sucking dove compared to such a railway magnate.

The capitalist who would be created by Socialism has one marked advantage. By no mistake in judgment, or misadventure in enterprise, can his capital be lost. He need never be overburdened, or in anxiety because of his risks. He is a capitalist without a capitalist's fears. So Jesus saw, as both His parables and his dealing with men of wealth prove, that the capitalist cannot be abolished. We may change the form and order under which he persists. But that is all. It is quite clear that the simplest form in which an individual, under due conditions, owns and employs his own capital, is to be preferred

to the State capitalist, with his unquestioned authority and his imperious arrogance.

III

While Jesus did not teach the abolition of the capitalist, He laid down the obligations of capital clearly and decisively. The first obligation is that of *honest and honourable service* with it. That obligation is expounded in the parable of the Pounds and its companion parable of the Talents. In these two parables men were entrusted with capital, placed under their individual control. That individual control is a necessity for the attainment of the character Christ requires, and for the increase he commends. But the point of both parables is that capital has the obligation of honest and honourable service. That obligation is discharged most wisely and with credit through personal labour. But even the dividend-earner, the man who merely puts his money out at interest, is commended. Ruskin cast some doubt upon this interpretation of our Lord's words to the man who did not use his talent. He wished to interpret the words, "Thou knewest that I was a hard man, reaping where I had not sown," as affirming that the taking of usury or interest is the practice only of "an hard man." Ruskin read the clause "reaping where I had not sown" as describing the injustice of the master. But

such an interpretation is not fair to the parable. It is still more to be condemned because it conflicts with what Christ would teach us in the parable about the character of God. The words only quote the slothful servant's jaundiced view of his master's demand. The argument is that if the servant basely thought his master "an hard man" he ought at least to have given him back his capital with the increment which would have cost the servant nothing. The servant's sin was to hide his capital in a napkin so that it served no purpose at all. Whenever capital is not being employed in honest and honourable service, whenever it is being used for the holder's pleasure or pride, or whenever it is being withheld from service, allowed to go to waste or to lie and rust, Christ's condemnation passes upon its holder.

A glance round the modern industrial world finds many businesses, enterprises, and employments, with a large yield of profit, condemned by this teaching of Christ. The businesses which work havoc on the lives and homes of the people, the trades which draw their profits from the vices and the weaknesses of men, the industries which are carried on merely to gather a superabundant gain, all the large number of enterprises which exploit the weak and the helpless, and especially the weak and helpless woman and child, cannot be called either honest or honourable service.

No man who is engaged in them can claim to be a follower of Christ. As a simple matter of fact, however eagerly men who are busy in such enterprises may claim to be Christian, and may support the Christian Church, they are never Christian in character. When they become Christian in character they alter their modes of business, or, if need be, they abandon their business all together.

The second obligation of capital is that of a *solicitous and generous oversight of labour*. The relations of capital and labour are not fulfilled even when a man has used his possessions in honest and honourable service. A further step must be taken. A master who fixes his thoughts merely on the gain of his employment cannot fail to sink to a low ethical level. A master who is absorbed in the service is open to many temptations. Every master's eye should be cast, as the eye of Boaz in the labour field of Bethlehem, upon the labourers. It should regard them with solicitous and generous care. In the parable of the vineyard the master of it went out into the market-place in the morning, and engaged his labourers for the work of the day. He went out again as the day wore on, and sent others into the vineyard. Going out at the eleventh hour he found some labourers still idle, and to these he gave employment. The primary purpose of that parable is to tell us how God rewards those who serve Him, and to point out that what He

regards is the spirit of service rather than the amount of service given. But the parable also indicates how the owner of capital ought to deal with his employees. Obviously this master of the vineyard sent these men into his vineyard at the eleventh hour not for his profit but because of their need. He knew that they could not earn a day's wage. But he also knew that they would go home at the close of the day without the price of their children's bread. These labourers in the market-place are the New Testament presentation of the modern reservoir of labour. But this master did not feel himself entitled to draw from this reservoir only so much as it would pay him to use. He found places and a wage for all. He felt himself under obligation to show a solicitous and generous oversight of labour.

This also is an obligation of modern capital. A keen economist may say that such a mode of dealing is not "good business," and that it would not pay in this world of eager competition. Are these statements correct? Are they not due to the strange blindness of the mere economist, and the obtuseness of the hard business man, who overlooks important factors in commercial prosperity? The business firm which treats its employees with this careful consideration, and keeps men on even when their employment is not profitable, and maintains a spirit of large and

generous dealing with its labourers, does not lose in the end by such open-handed ways. They find individual instances of ingratitude, and at times a willingness to take a mean advantage of their generosity. But the greater number respond with goodwill. "With what measure ye meet, it shall be measured unto you again," is a law of industry as much as of courtesy. Every manager of a business knows that the goodwill and the joyful energy of his employees are worth a percentage of profit which cannot be calculated, yet is both certain and large. To set down concrete cases within my knowledge, the master who continued a workman's wages during a month of illness; that other employer who kept on a squad of men for a fortnight in merely refitting and renewing his premises until orders came in; that other master of labour who called his men in on a day of storm, and sent them home, and yet paid them their full wages at the end of the week, have all testified that, quite apart from the moral blessing of such conduct, its material gain was evident. Not one of these men so dealt with ever skulked, and what that means in a year's labour the merest tyro can realise. To take even a simpler case, the employer who thinks of the refreshment of those who serve him finds that the paltry cost is far exceeded by the actual gain. The larger issues are more manifest. Many of the labour

troubles which have brought energetic business men to ruin would never have arisen if the employers had been wise enough, which is simply Christian enough, to exercise a solicitous and careful oversight towards their employees. There are businesses which are being conducted on this principle, and they are succeeding in the competition of the world, while their masters have the added satisfaction of contented and willing and resourceful labourers.¹

The third obligation of capital goes beyond these two moralities. It is that of *self-sacrifice on occasion of need*. That obligation is taught us in the parable of the unmerciful servant. There we have a debtor who owed his lord ten thousand talents and had nothing to pay. His lord might have sold him up, and by the price of the enslaving of the man and his wife and children, made an attempt to recoup himself for his loss. But the master freely forgave him the whole hopeless debt. His conduct is set in contrast with that of the

¹ Notable and evident proofs of this method are to be seen in the model houses built and the social provision made by Messrs Cadbury at Bournville, near Birmingham, Messrs Lever at Port Sunlight, near Liverpool, and Messrs Rowntree at Swanwick, near York. Equally praiseworthy are the arrangements made by Messrs Krupp at Essen in Westphalia. Their three model villages, their hospitals and convalescent homes, their stores on which they guarantee a dividend, their banks to whose rate of interest they add one and a half per cent., their pensioners' cottages, display both German thoroughness and a high ideal of the employer's obligations. The writer wishes to set down his indebtedness to Messrs Krupp for their solicitous courtesy on the occasion of his visit.

unmerciful servant who cast his neighbour into prison for a trifling sum. That is a very fair representation of the method of dealing which capital too often employs with labour.

Now no one is entitled to read this parable as though it meant to teach a lax dealing with debtors who ought to pay their debts, and could do so if they were so minded. Any master who does not expect and exact from his labourers a full and honest day's work up to their capacity and strength, is doing them an injury. Nor should it be read as meaning that debtors should be careless in their spending, or that labourers should be slack in their duty, relying on the clemency of those with whom they deal. But it does mean that there are times when capital is called upon to practice self-sacrifice, so as to relieve the distress and lessen the misery of those under an employer's care. It means also that when the capitalist uses his resources and his command of the market with a merciless disregard of others, he is abusing the trust committed to him. All far-seeing capitalists realise the economic wisdom of generous dealing even when they are not convinced of moral obligation. A large wholesale company, when wisely managed, does not drive the unsuccessful customer to the wall and squeeze the last penny out of him. They endeavour to set him on his feet again, knowing that he may be a profitable customer in time to come. All large

employers have come to see that it does not pay them to allow labour to leave their neighbourhood in a time of industrial strain, or to ignore the necessities of the labourers. The more far-sighted among them are assured that what they can do for their employees, above and beyond their legal and even prudential obligations, is both wise and essential to the happy conduct of their affairs. The contributions to their workmen's clubs, their provision for the comfort of their homes, their supply of conveniences which were not formerly dreamed of, their quick response to any special need, and their prompt relief in a time of calamity, are dictated by moral feeling. But they are amply justified as wise economics.

This obligation of sacrifice is already recognised in one direction. When any disaster takes place which is public and dramatic, and appeals to quickly-moved sympathies, capital is usually found to make a willing and fairly ample response. There are mean firms and narrow-hearted men whose names are never found on these subscription lists. But the larger number of business firms, especially of the abler and more alert minded, are generous in their gifts. If capital were to mark the beggar at its own gate, to have eyes to see the unfed thousands that pass by its own door in time of need, to remember the distress that can be found within a stonecast of its own home,

and to exercise this grace of sacrifice towards such necessities, it would discharge one of its obligations, and find an abundant reward. Some men may doubt whether such conduct would be as economically profitable as is here maintained. No Christian man can deny that this is in line with the root principle of the life of Him who gave Himself for us in our need.

III

The effects of the fulfilment of these obligations of capital upon our social unrest would be immediate, salutary, and uplifting to both the capitalist and his employees. Although the labourer may seldom express his thought in clear terms, and may still more seldom analyse his own mind, it remains undoubtedly true that much of the social unrest is due to a deep resentment against the failure to fulfil these obligations. There may be agitators who stir up workmen's minds by heated arguments. There are always men who are envious of the well-being and the power of others. These are the men who, when they become masters, are frequently the most unscrupulous and regardless of employers. Their whole agitation is often tainted by a deep selfishness. The lives they live and the homes they build and possess, show that they know how to profit by their advocacy of what they call "the rights of labour," and by

their pose as labouring men. But the genuine working man is usually a fair minded and honest-hearted employee. He does not grudge any master his fair profits. He is rather proud of the able management and foresight and energy which have created the large business where he serves. But he does resent, and ought to resent, every denial of these obligations of honest and honourable service, of careful oversight of the lives of men, and of generous sacrifice in time of need. When he sees the masters sitting high in security and ease and living in undiminished luxury, in a time of strain, out of profits made in years of successful trade; when he marks that they are unwilling to share their prosperity with their servants, and contest every claim for a slight advance in wages; and when he observes that they have no eyes of compassion for him and his fellows going idle through weeks of depression, and no care for his bare home and anxious-minded wife and poverty-bitten children, he realises that there is something wrong. He dimly perceives that there is an abuse of capital. It is no wonder that he leaps to the conclusion that the capitalist should be abolished.

Beyond this immediate effect upon the mind and bearing of the world of labour there would be the even more important effect upon the relationships of our social order. No class of men can witness and suffer from greed and merciless self-

aggrandisement, or from heedless apathy and mean neglect, without becoming embittered in mind and without being degraded in character. No man can feel himself to be merely a "hand," or a number on the roll, without being lessened in his own self-respect, and lowered in his manhood. No man can be regarded merely as a hireling without being tempted to cherish the spirit of the hireling. Behind our social unrest there lies, as all close observers see, not only obvious wrong, but this deeply-rooted sense of social injury, and that is a fruitful cause of the tumult of modern life. If all employers of labour, from the great firms who discharge thousands from their gates every night, to the man who has a single clerk in his office, or to the mistress who has a single maid in her home, were to recognise these obligations a social sympathy would be bred between employer and employee whose value is above rubies. There is no doubt but that, to take the simplest case, much of the unrest in domestic service is due not to discontent with the wages, and not even to the desire to have every night free for social enjoyment, but to the frequent absence of any care or regard for the servant's well-being. Bad mistresses make bad maids. There are homes which keep their servants for years because they fulfil all the obligations of capital to the labour they employ.

Their reward in actual service is well worth its cost.

There is what I am inclined to think a still higher gain from this realisation of a completely ethical employment of capital. We have seen that the sources of poverty are more largely ethical rather than economical. We have noted that they are rather due to the labourer's lack of moral strength and poverty of conscience, than to his lack of hopeful outlook and poverty of means. But what could be more potent in its effect upon both the conscience and the heart of the labourer than an obvious exhibition of noble and generous administration of capital on the part of the master. That example would be borne in upon him by all the sanction of a new regard for the man he serves. Would not drunkenness be lessened, improvidence be checked, and sloth almost extinguished? Would not the habit of investing the workman's small capital with wisdom be formed if a shining example of similar virtue were daily before his eyes? If workmen saw misfortune tenderly dealt with, and incompetence duly remembered, both in its weakness and in its need, would not all labour questions be considered in a kindlier atmosphere, and by minds free from the dispeace and distemper of a sense of wrong?

It is not too bold to say that in the teaching of Jesus this last consideration, which may seem to

some of little moment, occupies a large place. Jesus struck unsparingly at whatever prevented the coming of the kingdom of God. He maintained an unflinching battle with the Pharisees. One of the leading counts of His indictment against them was that they not only did not enter the kingdom themselves, but they prevented those who might have entered in. In His rebuke of Simon the Pharisee, when He caught him eyeing the woman behind His feet with a cold contempt, He condensed His protest against those who hinder the weak and the dependent and the castaway from seeing and receiving the kingdom of God. But the capitalist who does not fulfil the obligations of capital not only tempts labour to these sins which lead to poverty, but he blinds men's eyes and paralyses their wills, so that they neither see nor desire a higher condition. Any mode of social life, any condition of the people, any relationship of capital and labour which obscures the mind of Christ, mocks at the ideal of Christian character, and pays no heed to the things of the kingdom of God, must meet with Christ's condemnation. No other hindrance receives a severer rebuke than this selfish and heedless disregard of the social obligations of capital.

The furthest effect, if not the saddest, of this failure to fulfil obligations, is that recognised in the moral degradation of the capitalist himself.

As we have seen the possession of wealth is not condemned by Christ, although He bids us, and those who possess it, mark its perils. A man of wealth may find that this talent is the special means of his growth in character. But when wealth is employed as capital, it enters into a sphere of action where its temptations are constant and keen. It is then that the passion of covetousness lurks at the door. It is then that the finer traits of character are in danger of being coarsened or lost. It is then that self-will is so easily nurtured. The capitalist is safe morally only so long as he fulfils all the ethical obligations of his capital. But, as we know, no obligations are more often evaded. The issue is seen not only in the arrogant temper and in the stony-hearted callousness of so many, but in the actual vices of large employers of labour. It is more marked still in the follies of their children. Ruskin has set this truth in the moving eloquence of *Unto This Last*. At its close he writes: "In all buying, consider, first, what condition of existence you cause in the producers of what you buy; secondly, whether the sum you have paid is just to the producer, and in due proportion lodged in his hands; thirdly, to how much clear use, for food, knowledge, or joy, this that you have bought can be put; and fourthly, to whom, and in what way, it can be most speedily and serviceably distributed." This

call to the capitalist he emphasises by his appeal to consider those whose lives cannot now be one of ease, much less of luxury. "Luxury is indeed possible in the future, innocent and exquisite; luxury for all, and by the help of all; but luxury at present can be enjoyed only by the ignorant; the cruellest man living could not sit at his feast unless he sat blindfold." But the capitalist, simply because he will not recognise and discharge all his obligations, continues to sit blindfold. His children, in consequence, lose the power of moral vision altogether.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEMANDS OF LABOUR

THE obligations of capital, as we have seen, can be clearly summed up from the teaching of Christ, and the rewards of observing them can be shown to be both enriching and vitalising. But their fulfilment is put to a practical test by the demands of labour. We turn now to consider these, discussing first, what these demands are, and examining them to learn how far they are just and reasonable. Then we shall consider how they can be met, and pass in review, with brief mention, the various suggestions which are being advocated.

I

The first demand of labour is *a living wage*. By a living wage is not meant merely enough to keep body and soul together. There must be sufficient to live a decent and fairly comfortable, a cleanly and a noble life. This demand for a living wage cannot be denied. Not only is the labourer worthy of his hire but the hire must be worthy of the labourer. It is ethically justified by the two truths that injustice is a cardinal sin

against Christ's law, and by the equally decisive fact that the man who has not a living wage is prevented from entering Christ's kingdom, or attaining that character which Christ declares to be the supreme achievement in life. If a man has not a decent living wage, he is deprived of the conditions of a healthful and a moral life. That is the point at which Jesus joins those who lay stress upon a bad environment. A generation ago the general mind was under the tyranny of the over-stated effects of heredity. We have escaped from that bogey, under wiser scientific teaching. We now realise how overdrawn was the argument from transmission. The ghost of the old theory still torments some minds, but that ghost will soon be laid. To-day men's minds have become obsessed with the omnipotence of the environment.¹ Jesus did not lay the stress on the environment which has mastered so many minds. He knew that a man could live among the Canaanites and yet keep his

¹ The latest example of this is to be found in the recent volume, *Social Environment and Moral Progress*, by that distinguished scientific man, Dr Alfred Russel Wallace, in which he treats character as though it were a natural feature, and although he denies a materialistic theory of the universe, he writes as though moral character were the result entirely of the action of external forces on our human nature. Throughout his book he writes as though moral character is produced in the same way as the physical features of animals and of man. It is an example of the obsession of the scientific mind by the laws of the physical universe, so that they are carried into the higher realm of morals. That fallacy seems to have nine lives.

faith, and that a good thing can come out of Nazareth. But, of course, He was also well aware, as we have proof, that the man who is hungry and fainting must have his need supplied or the gospel of His Word has little chance of being received. As Wesley naïvely put it, "No man was ever converted with cold feet." The man who is underpaid and underfed, ill-clothed and badly housed, the woman who is sweated and overdriven, and the child who is wronged in body and mind are not easily accessible to a message of God's grace. Quite apart from the justice of this demand for a living wage its moral necessity is as clamant an argument.

The demand for the living wage must not be confounded with the political demand for a minimum wage. That demand has been made ridiculous by its being set at 30s. a week. It would be pleasant, undoubtedly, if every labourer received such a weekly wage. But the question is one of economics. It was shown when the matter was discussed in the House of Commons¹ that to demand and fix that wage would be to extinguish many industries altogether. It was proved that in the case of 2,000,000 workers the net annual output of the whole industry did not amount to £75 for each employee, and that in the case of 2,250,000 more the net income was under £100 per annum. If 30s. per week were paid as wages, there would be

¹ 9th April 1913.

not only no profits and no rent and no interest on the capital, but there would be no rates and taxes, and no wages for the clerks and other non-producers.

Yet a living wage is a necessity for the simple reason that an industry cannot be carried on if the labourer is not suitably maintained. The wages of the workman should be the first charge upon industry, and the reward of capital should be always the second. That brings us face to face with the conclusion that the industries which cannot pay a living wage, and cannot maintain themselves within the United Kingdom, must be discontinued and the labourers encouraged to emigrate elsewhere. That consummation, as we shall see, may be more likely than some rash orators either dream or desire. But it too often happens that the living wage could be paid and yet is denied. There are many cases of men who live in luxury, and leave large fortunes to their children, while they have refused their employees a just share of the profits. There have been some who have maintained that the slightest increase on the wages bill would compel them to close down their works. Yet at their death they have left large sums of money whose foundation and annual increment came from the business which they declared to be in peril of extinction. It is not possible to fix a minimum wage by statute. But it is inevitable that a living wage must be attained.

A second demand of labour is to have *some interest in the work*. No toil can be a constant delight. A man's work can never be free from strain and from sweat of brow and brain. No matter what a man works at, or however deeply he may love his occupation, there are days when it is irksome and painful. There are hours when his whole nature reacts against it. There are details in all toil which are tedious and straining, costly of care and time and temper. Most men think that another's occupation is more desirable than their own, only because they are ignorant of the strain and the exhaustion which the other's occupation entails. Yet no man can be entirely happy as a mere handle to a machine, or a ratchet for a wheel. Much of the painfulness, and most of the monotony, of modern industry is due to the fact that so many are merely tenders of machines. Yet, apart from the deep and vital truth that the worker in the most monotonous toil ought to have interests outside of it, and beyond it, there should be some interest in it, from the fact that it is a bit of work to be honestly done for a due reward. The girl who works a loom, the rivetter at a ship's plate, the labourer at a building, the engineer in the engine-room of a great steamer, along with many more, have a kind of labour which is painful and laborious. Yet if they are right minded there is interest enough in what

they are producing, and the constant call for the watchful eye and the careful hand ought to give a zest for their toil.¹ When the *Aquitania* was launched on the Clyde one rivetter was heard to say to another, "It is something to have hammered the rivets on a boat like that." The really monotonous work of the world seems to me to be that much coveted occupation of a clerk, sitting perched on his high stool, and making entries of accounts all day long. That also has its interest for the mind. But it is no wonder that so many escape from such a drab and humdrum life to make the risky experiment of growing oranges in Florida, or to the stern labour of farming in Canada. There are some kinds of labour, such as the scavenging of the city, the driving of its tramway cars, or the making of a boiler, which are less than interesting, and are straining to a man's senses and nerves. But when a man is a believer in God, and lives under the influence of things unseen, he will not find it difficult to follow

¹ Mark Twain, in his *Tom Sawyer*, has a penetrating and suggestive exposition of the truth that the most irksome bit of work can become not only an absorbing occupation but a delight, when discharged under the power of compelling external motives. It is set in his own amusing way. Yet the sketch of the boy who enlisted the eager services of his companions in the dirty and painful job of whitewashing a fence in the leisure hours of a Saturday morning, should be read and pondered by some of those windy orators at Conferences, who have not understood how work can be made more absorbing than play.

in the footsteps of Him who spent most of His years in a village carpenter's shop. Even if this faith has not been given him, he can always have that ennobling motive of working at his humble toil for those he loves, and in whose well-being he delights. As Burns has set it, in his true perception of what life is—

“To make a happy fireside clime
To weans and wife,
That is the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.”

After all, that must remain the chief interest in all work for the millions of humanity. Without that interest, all work is akin either to slavery, or to a dull distraction from life's unmeaning round. We must not, therefore, let this demand of labour loom too large. The wisest labour leaders do not set it in the forefront.

The third demand of labour is *leisure*. This demand for more leisure is as insistent as the demand for larger wages. Mr Ramsay Macdonald sets them in a single sentence when he says, “The two standard demands of an industrial democracy, a living wage and a maximum of leisure, are primarily ethical demands.” We may reach some conclusion as to what is meant by a living wage, but what is meant by a maximum of leisure no one seems to know. One speaker, Mr Fra. Newbery, lately declared that it meant “unlimited leisure,”

and, as we have seen, Mr H. G. Wells supports that pronouncement when he agrees to give every man a dividend for his support whether he works or not. A more moderate estimate claims a working day of four or five hours. That claim leaves a very large amount of leisure in every week. Along with this claim there is usually presented a Utopian picture of the man free from toil, spending the happy hours of a long day in communion with nature, or pursuing some branch of art, or perfecting himself in the knowledge of literature, or the practice of music.

Against this claim to limit the hours of labour there are two serious objections. The first is, that as the wealth of the world is produced only by its labour, it is open to question whether four or five hours a day on the part of the entire population would produce the wealth which the world requires. That amount of labour might produce the bare necessities of life, and reach nearly to what a living wage could secure. But as long as men remain human, and if the race is to progress in its aptitudes and tastes, we shall require much more than that.

The second objection is vital. A maximum of leisure, in spite of Mr Ramsay Macdonald, is not an ethical demand. Most men are ethically the better of being employed at some steady occupation throughout the larger number of the hours of their day. The old proverb, "Satan finds some mischief

still for idle hands to do " will never be out of date. The real question of leisure is the method of its spending. There is already a large degree of leisure in the life of the modern working man, and it can be freely said that it is as large an amount as he has shown himself able to use. It is as large as any man, in any sphere of life, can be entrusted with, or any man should desire. Look at the actual case. Labour now enjoys one day and a half of leisure from toil in every week. The greater number of manual labourers work no more than fifty-four hours a week. Many are employed for a lesser number of hours. If we allow a man eight hours in bed, he is left with fifty-eight hours a week at his own disposal. If we take three hours a day, of the six working days of the week, for the indispensable offices of eating and drinking and cleansing and of going to and from business, he is still left with about forty hours of absolute leisure in every week. But there are the holidays throughout the year in addition. When we remember these facts there is a feeling that this cry for leisure is overdone. It is in some cases only the cry of laziness disguising itself. Men used to speak of the dignity of labour. They now covet the dignity of idleness. They seem to think, and sometimes speak, as if the lot of the idle rich, which is the most cursed existence a man can endure, is to be supremely desired. When

one sees how many spend their leisure merely in loafing and lounging, in drinking and gambling, or in watching other men play games and betting on the result, it is open to say that this demand for a maximum of leisure is not reasonable. It is imperative to say that under present circumstances it is not ethical. No one would ever dream of defending the overtaking of the labouring man. But a healthy mind is quite as happy, and is as nobly employed in a bit of honest work, as in the gratification of any sense, or the exercise of any energy in the play of life.

The conclusion we reach is, that the demand for the living wage is inevitable, because it is both ethically and economically reasonable. But it can never be a wage which will reach the profusion and ease which some men desire. It will always call for household economies, and abstinence from any idle gratification of sense or wasteful indulgence of the passions. To those who keep moral ends in view that should be regarded as a wise limitation. The demand for interest in work cannot be satisfied, nor should it be satisfied, if the work itself is to be regarded as the ultimate aim in life. This demand is found chiefly on the lips of those who have failed to realise where the highest and most inspiring interest of life should be placed. It can be satisfied not by any new adjustment between wealth and poverty, or capital

and labour, but by making the man a new creature in his hopes and energies.

The third demand, for ample leisure, we have seen to be neither wise nor ethical. So that we are left with what is, after all, the one real demand upon which all other demands are based—that for a larger and a sufficient share of the produce of capital and labour. Most men would agree that if the average working man received a sufficient share of the profits of trade he could secure enough interest in life, and enough leisure in his day to gratify all his desires.

II

We pass on to consider how this demand for a larger share could be met, and to review the suggestions which are being canvassed to-day. These suggestions may be classified as three in number. The first is by a coercive equal distribution of wealth or of income. The second is by various adaptations of our present industrial system. The third is by an adjustment of our laws and a quickening of the public conscience, both in making them and in keeping them, so as to secure for the labourer a due reward for his toil, and the place in the community which a moral life requires.

Take first the suggestion of a *coercive equal distribution*. This is sometimes spoken of as a distribution of wealth, but what is meant is a dis-

tribution of income. These two, wealth and income, are not clearly distinguished even by some who affect authority. An economic fallacy which clouds a large number of minds, and darkens the thoughts of the working classes, is that wealth is something stored up in a great reservoir which can be drawn upon at will. Or, to use a different image, it is a huge warehouse of goods, of which the rich keep the key and to which they help themselves in selfish abundance. Men who have this view of wealth think of the banks and their stores of gold, the buildings and manufactories and machineries of our industrial system, the investments at home and abroad, and they cherish the idea that if these were equally divided, labour would get its share and poverty be unknown. But wealth is not an inexhaustible reservoir. It is a stream which must be produced every year. It is not a warehouse of stored-up goods. It is rather a barn which must be filled season by season. If the aggregate wealth of the world were equally divided it would not make any appreciable difference to anyone. Real wealth is the food and clothing and shelter, with all the commodities which are continually being poured forth from mine and quarry and loom, and most of all from the land and the resources of nature. That cannot be divided, as some seem to think, by weighing it out in scales, and giving a portion as

a possession to every man. It must be produced year by year, and all that can be divided is the annual income produced by the co-operation of capital and labour. The men who speak of unlimited leisure, and couple it with idle talk of an equal distribution of wealth, are not realising what wealth is, and how it must be produced.

When we consider the equal distribution of income, we are met by the ethical objections to this panacea of Socialism which we have already seen to be insuperable. Such a compulsory distribution involves the loss of individual freedom, and it would lay an arrest on the moral and industrial progress of the race. If once it were attempted every man would rebel against such a rigid policing of life, and cry with the open-air tramp of George Borrow's mind—

“Give me again my hollow tree,
A crust of bread and liberty.”

Apart from the ethical objections no plan has yet been suggested which has made a coercive equal distribution of income practicable. A popular estimate of the national income asserts that it has risen to £2,000,000,000 per annum. If we estimate the population of the United Kingdom as 45,000,000, and admit the somewhat large average, under modern conditions, of five persons to a family, we reach the number of 9,000,000 families. This would give an annual family

income of £220 under a scheme of equal distribution. But quite apart from the fact that under these altered conditions this annual income would not be produced, no one can suggest how this division could be accomplished. It remains a mere matter of arithmetic upon a page, and contains more surd factors than have yet emerged. Everyone with more than £220 a year, and a good many with much less but with prospects of more, and a large number with a good deal less and no prospects at all, are resolutely and conscientiously opposed to any such coercive division, or to any division at all. No one can see how the opposition of these unwilling persons, who at present include the majority of the State, can be overcome. Nor has any one yet faced the results of the dislocation and the destruction not only of our present methods of wealth, but of our common life and social well-being, which the attempt to make such a distribution would occasion. In a word, until men have been ethically changed, and the whole mode of producing wealth has been radically altered, to talk of compulsory distribution is to talk of binding the wind.¹

III

The second class of suggestions is the *adaptation of our present industrial order*. That industrial

¹ Cf. Prof. Smart: *Distribution of Income*, p. 101.

order is based upon the control of the single employer, the firm, the company, or the board of directors. This method has undoubted advantages. It gives a field for initiative. It finds a place and reward for brains. It introduces an element of competition which secures a continually improving quality of goods, and a resourcefulness in manufacture. It relieves the labourer of the greater part of the risk. It may be boldly said that if all employers and all employees were ethically Christian, our present industrial order would require only the slight adjustments necessitated by the changing conditions of modern civilisation. But the fact that cannot be ignored is that the issues of the system are saddening and embittering in too many instances, and we have, therefore, many successive and varied attempts to adapt and to modify it.

The first attempt at adjustment was made by *the action of Trades Unions*. The Trades Unions organised labour, clarified and stated its demands, pruned them of their extravagances both in ideal and in method, and successfully imposed some of them upon capital, and upon the community. During recent years the Trades Unions have ceased to be entirely labour societies. They have become political organisations. But that is due chiefly to the fact that the new ideal of the State calls upon it to interfere more largely between capital

and labour. The Trades Unions have found it easier to enforce their demands through the action of the State than through their power as trade societies.

How far this trend and tendency may go no one can tell. We see it clearly operative in the call so successfully made upon the State to settle trade disputes, and to arbitrate in questions of hours and wages. The Old Age Pensions Act and the Insurance and Employment Act, are outstanding examples of a still further result. Behind them, no doubt, there beats a desire to equalise the conditions of life. But, as practical politics, they are enforced by organised labour endeavouring to adjust our present industrial order. In one sense they are deferred pay on the part of the employer. In another sense they are the increment to the wages of labour, such as the employer cannot pay. It is, therefore, laid as a burden upon the whole community. Yet it must be observed that all these adjustments leave our present industrial order unchanged. With one exception, no modern interference between capital and labour assails the individualistic basis of society. For it is clear that they merely levy a tax on income, and do not attack capital. The only exception of the past few years has been the Death and Succession Duties. That Act directly assailed capital. It steps in at a time when the assault is least felt.

Yet it stands alone as the one enactment of legislation which assails, not the annual increment, but the actual possession, of wealth. All these attempts at adjustment have had a measure of good, and we may consider them as likely to continue and develop.

But discontent with the partial success and slowness of this method of adjustment, and especially with the fact that the demands of labour are not so fully met as they should be, has led to other attempts. These aim at some modification of this system of firm, or company, or board of directors. The best known of these attempts is *Co-operation*. But Co-operation has hardly faced any one of the labour problems. Few of the members of Co-operative Societies are inspired by its ideal. Few are wholly loyal to its methods. Most of the persons who join a society are induced to do so by the dividend, and Co-operation becomes merely a form of banking. But beyond this the Co-operative societies have not attempted co-operative production. The larger societies are manufacturing. But their factories are worked entirely on the firm system, and they employ individual labourers who are paid a wage as they would be by any other board of directors. Co-operation, up to this time, is really only a system of distribution of goods within a narrow area of domestic wants. But it has done nothing to solve

the problem of the larger wage and increased leisure. It has demonstrated the truth that such societies are not enterprising, and that they will not pay for brains. It is quite clear that as a method of healing our social unrest, and adjusting our industrial order, Co-operation need not be taken into account.

A more modern modification is *profit-sharing*. When this proposal was first mooted it seemed to hold a solution in its grasp. There are still some sanguine minds who believe that it can be adapted so as to promote social advance. But its history is a long series of failure, and sometimes of disaster, with only occasional and unimportant successes. The first scheme of the kind was undertaken in 1829. At the end of eighty years, in 1909, one hundred and ninety-eight schemes had been set in operation. Most of these were started in the three years from 1889 to 1892, when hope in this method rose high. In these three years, eighty-four profit-sharing schemes were established. But of this number sixty-four are already dead. Of the whole number attempted, only forty-nine had any length of life. These are the smaller experiments, with a man of practical genius and buoyant spirit behind them. The system suffers through the almost universal incompetence of all such systems to work beyond a few branches of production. It has neither the power of initiative,

nor of elastic adaptation, possessed by a firm with inventive and ambitious brains behind it. But besides, profit-sharing has some inherent faults which must be always fatal to it. One of these is that the employees must take greater risks than they can afford. A depression in trade, or the competition of more efficient business men, or an inefficient or dishonest manager, renders the business unprofitable, and the workman's bread is in peril. In the larger businesses, the profits accruing to the workman have been so small, that it does not seem, to them, worth while to share the burden and to run the risk. Then there remains the constant sense that the capital and the management are absorbing too great a proportion of the profits. That breeds both the discontent, which prevents the work being carried on, and the revolt, which breaks up the method. Profit-sharing received a blow from which it will not soon recover in the failure of the last carefully thought-out scheme introduced by Lord Furness. It was entered upon with high enthusiasm. After three years of trial it was rejected by the men themselves as impracticable. Only armchair enthusiasts now look to it with any hope.

Another method of modification which has more promise is that of *co-partnership between capital and labour*. This method provides for the workman, who is employed on an individual basis, becoming

a shareholder in the firm, and taking a limited risk of ownership. It is an enlargement of the shareholding system so as to include the labourers in any industry among the masters over it. It enshrines the truth which is being groped after in Syndicalism. But it requires a labourer who has become ethical enough to be sober, and steady, and thrifty, and to work with an outlook to the year after next. As with all other schemes, this method strikes down finally to touch the moral quality of the man who is going to work it.

To sum up in brief terms, it may be said, once for all, that all this searching after methods and organisations and adjustments, with the hope that social salvation can be attained through them, is a wild goose chase, if not a mere crying for the moon. Even such an Act of Parliament as the Insurance Act will work only as men are willing to make the sacrifice it demands. The industrial problem, at its core, is ethical. When we realise that with good men almost any kind of method will work, and without good men, nothing will work at all, we shall see how inevitable is the imperative of Christian ethics. Better masters, whether capitalists or not, and better men, whether wage-earners or dividend receivers, are the indispensable necessity. The problem here, as elsewhere, is the problem of the better man rather than the better State.

IV

This conclusion may be to some not only disappointing but annoying, and they will be tempted to deny it with heat. It has become so evident to many economists, with quick human sympathies, who see little hope of this ethical advance, that they have become pessimists as to the future. But those of us who believe in the ethical progress of humanity, remain optimists. We are optimists because of Christ. We agree that the economics of Adam Smith, or of any other who keeps his eyes only on the wealth of nations, have no healing because they are not distinctively Christian. But we are assured that as the Christian ethic leavens the thinking of men, the just and reasonable demands of labour will be met, and out of the abundant provision the world can certainly give, every man will have his proper work, a living wage, and something more for it, and a sufficient, though not a profligate, leisure in which "to cultivate his garden."

There are two methods by which the coming of this better time may be accelerated. The first of these is by what may be called *an ethical taxation*. That is to say that the State shall continue to tax the richer, more comfortable, and privileged classes so as to ease the burdens of the poorer, making their toil more easy and giving them a larger share in the gladness and refinements of life. Mr Joseph

Chamberlain, many years ago, struck out a word which he seems to have forgotten in his later career. That was the word "*ransom*." He suggested the doctrine that the richer should pay for their privileges, their pleasant surroundings, their soft luxury and their ease of mind, "a ransom" to those through whom they were produced. That seed is germinating in many minds. It has intensified that passion of pity of which I wrote on an earlier page. It is producing in men's minds to-day what may be called a compunction, and almost a repentance for a high social position. Many men who are rich are almost ashamed of it. They cannot pass among the dwellings of the poor without a twinge of conscience. This mind is being worked out in what I have called ethical taxation. That is the real force behind Old Age Pensions and Insurance and Unemployment Acts. It is the motive power behind the efforts of large numbers who become almost fanatical about poverty, and the more equal distribution of wealth. An ethical taxation will lay an embargo on the idleness of the rich, and make excessive profits and unearned increment, either on land or industry, impossible. It will lay a direct tax on all wealth for the sake of the poor. This method of ethical taxation has its limits. It cannot be carried out, as some crafty Evolutionary Socialists believe, so as to extinguish capital. Long before its tide has

risen so high as to drown the capitalist it would drown every labourer. It would take away all incentive from men and produce anarchy. Yet up to a certain limit, ethical taxation can be employed to meet the demands of labour and to relieve the poor, and thereby heal our social unrest.

The second and the better method is *the increase of wealth*. When the annual stream of wealth is larger and deeper there will be more for everyone. There is no madder idea than that of the restriction of output, through the working of only a few hours a day, as a means of bettering the working man. The restriction of output is one of those plausible, but most diabolical fallacies, which curse many trades and warp the minds of many Social reformers. For what is the most potent cause of our modern social unrest? What lies behind the demand for an ampler leisure? It is *the qualitative increase of our desires*. The labouring classes are better off than they were a generation ago. They have better food, better clothing, better homes, better education, more leisure, more ease, and more pleasure in life than their fathers had. Their wages, as we have seen, have risen, although they have not risen in due proportion to the wealth of the community. But the acute difficulty lies in the fact that their appetites and tastes have increased both in number and delicacy. They will not, and they can not, live as their fathers

lived. There is no way to gratify these keener appetites, and more delicate tastes, except by increasing the annual stream of wealth, and especially the wealth of lovely and refining things. The man who pretends to be a friend of the working classes, and suggests the limiting of the hours of labour, until only a fragment of each day is employed, is all unconsciously the deadliest foe of their well-being.

In the increase of the annual stream of wealth there are four factors. One of these is labour. Another is capital. The third, if I may express it in a concrete word, is brains. The fourth is the resources of nature. I have set these down in the reverse order of their importance. The resources of nature are the ultimate and the indispensable source of all wealth. A drought or a drench, or the contrast between some few square miles of salt-encrusted sand or boggy moor, and a vista of rolling prairie land, will bring that home to the dullest toiler. Next in importance are the brains. The wealth of the world has been largely increased in the past century by the work of its men of imagination and inventive genius, by its organisers and captains of industry, who have compelled the earth to produce twenty-fold more, and have taken its raw materials and extorted untold riches even from their waste. Capital is able merely to give these men an opportunity, to lay the

materials at their feet, and to build a shelter over their heads. Last, and least important of all, is the labourer. Any observer can see that the labourer is being eliminated, and that the demand on the part of a mere tender of a machine for an equal share is not practicable, nor is it ethical. If there be any complaint about the injustice of reward, the man of science, who has so largely increased the wealth of the world, has the clearest case. Browning asks, thinking of the poet whose music other men adapt in their imitative melodies :

“What porridge had John Keats?”

So when we regard both the quantity and the quality, both the cost to themselves and the value to the world, of the work of the man of science, he remains the most poorly rewarded of men. To most of his class we have given only poverty, and broken hopes, a sense of injustice, and an early grave. Capital has usually been well rewarded for its share as a factor in producing the annual wealth. The labourer has his just demand, but it cannot be based, as some concretely put it, on the declaration that out of his ten fingers has come the wealth of the world. Were economics alone to rule, the labourer is being paid his full share. The man who stands to lift a lever, or adjust a frame, or knock out a piece of coal with a pick, is not entitled, on economic grounds, to a

large reward. He does not contribute so largely as his thoughtless advisers suggest to the production of wealth. It is entirely on ethical grounds that his claim can be justified. It follows all the more surely, that only as the wealth of the world is increased, as the stream is deeper and fuller, can the demands of labour, based upon the rights of manhood, and supported by conscience disciplined by the ethics of Christ, be granted. Whoever increases the wealth of the world increases the betterment of its poor. Whoever lessens the stream gives someone less to drink of its satisfying waters. When working folk, in a time of commercial distress, go out to seek work and find none, they have abundant leisure. They have also the scanty board, and the cheerless hearth.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

THE problems of social unrest which have seized and held the public mind belong to the industrial order. They affect the relationship of riches to poverty, and express that persistent desire for a more equitable distribution of income as a method of abolishing destitution. The focus of men's thinking, therefore, is on the duty of capital to labour so as to satisfy its demands. These problems are kept quick and living by a constant succession of labour troubles. The attention given in the press and the controversies in Parliament draw men's eyes towards them. The deep, underlying sense of justice between man and man, and the quickened compunction of the privileged for the disadvantaged also tends to fasten our thoughts on this vital point. The issue without doubt will be a continual amelioration of the condition of the labourers, both in their wage and their social condition.

But there is one problem which has not yet attracted the interest of the masses of the people. It is only fitfully heard of, and has not yet been

searchingly discussed. To many to whom work and wages are kindling words the problems of the land and the people excite little concern. Yet, as we saw at the close of the last chapter, the question of the land and its resources are of such supreme importance that we may expect a keen and perhaps bitter contest over their settlement. The present holders of the land are awaking to what the emergence of these problems may mean. They are not only stirred and irritated but alarmed, when suggestions of an inquiry into land tenure and estate management are made. They are deeply excited at any inquiry which is gathering information without their direction and independently of their witness. Let us look into the ethics of this coming question of the land and the people.

I

The factors in the present situation are both peculiar and critical. The first is the indispensable necessity of the land for all that makes life worth living. In this regard the soil of the country is like no other element of use, or of well-being, except perhaps the air men breathe and the water they drink. Under the word "land" there is included the ground on which men walk, and work, and build their homes ; the fields which yield them bread ; the strata out of which they dig their

minerals; the soil by which the raw materials of their manufactures are produced; the streams whence they draw the water required for all the common services of humanity and the needs of man and beast. In short, the wealth and the health, the sustenance and the enjoyment of men are all centred on the land as they are on nothing else which men can possess. It is evident, as Chalmers in his far-seeing prescience pointed out to his generation, that all the questions of the city poor and their mean homes, of housing and rent, of comfort and social independence strike down at last to this subject of the land. All modern economists, who are not concerned with some mere detail of work and wages, realise how fundamental both to the wealth and to the health of the community is the management and use of the land.

This feature of its indispensable necessity is made more significant when we consider its issues. These are somewhat hidden from us by the fact that the average citizen does not realise his close dependence on the wise management of the land. In the newer countries no one can escape realising how instantly dependent men are upon the vast plains which are being brought under cultivation. In the older countries, no longer dependent entirely on what they themselves produce, and fed by large and cheap supplies

of imported food, the restricted use of the land does not seem to be so serious a matter. That attitude is so mistaken that even in Great Britain and Ireland the failure of the harvest is a national disaster. If the coal-supply were exhausted the national life would undergo a change so great that no man cares to imagine it. The proper use of the land is a necessity not only for the supply of the wants of men but for our national existence.

It is almost equally vital for the settlement of the problem to remember that it was not created in the same way as other forms of wealth. It has been increased in extent and valuableness. It has been drained, cleansed of its stones and thorns and weeds, cleared of its hindering brushwood, fertilised by digging up its sub-soil and treating it with enriching chemicals. Here again brains have been at work and a skilful and thoughtful agriculture has tripled the value of the original soil. It is a part of this problem that much of this work has been done by peasants who were evicted by the landowner to make room for more profitable tenants. This aspect of the problem is deepened in significance by the fact which shakes the nerve of every economist since it first terrified Parson Malthus. That fact is its limited quantity pressed upon by a constantly increasing population. It is this limit in

quantity, with the constant increase of demand which has made it so easy to render land a monopoly. This will give a note of passion to the demand for an adjustment of land-tenure, as soon as the importance of its use and enjoyment is understood.

One conclusion evident since ever men began to think about land and its possession will hasten the demand for a new settlement. That conclusion is that land must be dealt with under different ideals and by different laws from other forms of wealth. It is quite common to read in some journals a protest against some suggested measures which deal with land, as stocks and shares are not dealt with. But from what has been said it will be seen that land is so distinct from every other possession that it requires distinctive laws. That has been recognised from the earliest days. The land-tenure of the Romans both in regard to public and in regard to private land exercised a control over its possessors which was not applied to those who held other property. The land laws of our own country have always been distinctive. Up to this time they have been distinctively in favour of the land-owner, when they should be distinctively in favour of no one. So that when land-tenure is reconsidered, while no wrong can be sanctioned, justice may call for a much closer control, and for the imposition of much heavier responsibilities

and burdens on those who possess and manage the land, than it would dictate in the case of other possessions. The questions which all laws of land-tenure must face are such as these—Who shall have the control of the land and the direction of its use? What are the purposes to which land in its use must be directed? And the third question is—How can it be adapted to supply the indispensable needs of the people, and to yield to men that use and enjoyment to which, as no one can deny, all men have an indefeasible right?

II

After this brief review of the problem let us turn to the ethics of the question as we find them in the teaching of Christ. We cannot say that it is easy, perhaps not even possible to gain any direct or quotable statements of the Land Question from the Scriptures and from the New Testament especially. That need not trouble us, if we can make sure of the first principles of Christian ethics and of their bearing on the problems of the land. Jesus never spoke directly about the problem for many reasons. Not only was He busily occupied with His own great work, but the land problem did not present itself to Him or to any one in Palestine in His day as it presents itself in our more crowded world with its large cities and its modern laws. Jesus was born into a system

of land tenure which had largely passed away in actual practice but was still marked in the laws and customs of His time.¹ The Hebrew land tenure was based on the idea that every family of the twelve tribes, except that of Levi, had a right to a portion of the land. That ideal was not land nationalisation. It was a precisely contrary conception. Every man had a right, absolute and inalienable, to his own marked-out portion of the land. It could not be taken from him even by the supreme authority. That conception of land-holding, with its relative laws, appears in the story of the daughters of Zelophehad and in the idyll of the Book of Ruth. It is asserted in the clearest way in the record of Naboth, who declared himself unable to surrender his patrimony even to the king. The sacredness of this individual possession is mirrored for us in the proverb, "Remove not the old landmark, and enter not into the fields of the fatherless" (Proverbs xxiii. 10). It is made more emphatic in the denunciations of the prophets against the land-grabbers of their time. Micah is denouncing the sin of all time when he says, "And they covet fields, and take them by violence, and houses and take them away; so they oppress a man in his house, even a man and his heritage" (Micah ii. 2). Once and once only Christ came into touch with this ancient

¹ Cf. p. 76.

and still recognised Hebrew land law. That single touch occurs in the most pathetic way. Jesus was born in Bethlehem because Joseph and Mary had to make their way from their home in Nazareth to the spot of their patrimonial possession. That possession had been lost to them, but in the picture of Mary passing up and down the dark streets of Bethlehem, looking for a shelter in her hour, we have the fitting representation of the landless class, and we realise that Christ must have known the elements of the land question in His own day. But it was complicated by the troubled history of the past with its captivities and exile, its deportation and the inrush of aliens, together with the rule of the Herods and latterly of the Romans. So that land reform was a problem so tangled that no lover of his country could attempt it. Many of the numerous insurrections were doubtless motivated by some hope of return to those primitive days when every man dwelt "under his own vine and fig tree." But the outlook of Christ was on a land overrun by foreign foes, with its people peeled and scattered, and, therefore, land reform was no part of His programme, or of His desire.

However desirable it might be to reproduce the Old Testament ideal, it is impossible unless in the newer and roomier worlds. We cannot, therefore, draw any counsel from it or from

any other fact of Christ's time. But we can set down, from Christ's ethical principles, three guiding truths which all land laws should endeavour to express, if social unrest is to be healed.

The first of these truths is that the *possession of land is a trust*. If anything can be accounted only a stewardship, held in trust not only for a man's own generation but for all succeeding generations it is the possession of land. And if anything can be called a stewardship with accountability to God it is the use and the increase of the earth, which is God's creation. The parable of the wicked husbandmen (Matthew xxi. 23) establishes the Christian principle that the fruit of the vineyard must be rendered up to its owner. If the Jewish leaders were chargeable with a disloyalty to their leaders in their selfish oversight, quite as much will the man, who either carelessly or selfishly employs his land, be condemned by the only absolute Owner of it. It ought not to require to be said that land is not to be kept or used for a man's own private profit and personal pleasures. Nor can it be allowed that the man who squanders the yield of his broad acres upon himself and his tastes, without regard to the proportion of the return to those who cultivate them, is answering the Christian ethical ideal. Still more is the absentee landlord who devolves the care of his land to his agent or factor, and has no connection

with it except that of drawing its rents, with an occasional visit to enjoy its sport, to be reprobated under the authority of Christ. In the same way if any man allows his land to become waste or to go back to marsh and tangle, he will be condemned more severely than the man who hid his talent in a napkin. For he cannot bequeath his possession in so valuable a condition as he received it. The first principle, which must and shall be inscribed in the coming land laws, is that the owner is only a steward of his land, and that he must give account of his stewardship both to his generation and to God.

The second truth is that *all land must be set apart to its appropriate uses*. We must have no narrow meaning for the term, the uses of land. One use is that of ministering to beauty, and, therefore, to the joy of life. We must not let a basely utilitarian view, of what the earth and its varied landscapes mean, determine our employment of them. There are hills and moors and glens, and there are wastes and wildernesses which were meant to be the sweet solitudes and the haunts of silence, as well as the inspiring and uplifting splendours of the habitable world. They ought to be kept free, whether by some private owner, or by the State, to promote the health, recreate the energies, and deepen the simple joys of men. Some parts of the earth should be devoted to the purposes

of the garden, where the lily which Christ marked may grow, where the quiet glade, as of Gethsemane, may still be a place of prayer. Another use of no small importance is to enhance the ease and the dignity of life. The broad park with its oaks, and the deep fir wood where game can thrive, and the forest on the hillside where deer find shelter are certainly justifiable uses of the land. But this does not justify the use of land, which can be employed for other and more clamant necessities, being set apart for these gardens and forests and pleasantries of the rich. That is one of the glaring crimes of modern landlordism. Anyone who will travel through England will see mile after mile of arable land which has been withdrawn from the plough. The visitor to a Highland strath or even a moorland hillside will be impressed with the millions of acres which are now devoted to the pleasures of sport, and to the scandalously large estates built up out of the farms of humble folk. He will be shown the green spots where once their houses stood. He will be shown fields going back to the heather. He will mark roads which have been closed, rights of way which have been denied, old customs of the clan which have been ignored, simply to make the owner's land more profitable for sport and for his private gain. He will be shown tracts of country which have been planted with forest trees to prevent them being

claimed as land for cottar folk. He will hear of estate after estate where the owner has not been seen upon the land for years, and does not know any one of the tenants who pay his rent. He will not wonder that certain noble types of peasantry are dying out, and the nation is suffering an irretrievable loss to its manhood and womanhood. This loss is due either to an infringement of the duty of stewardship, or a breach of the law of appropriate use.

These uses I have mentioned may be called the accidental uses of land. Its essential use lies in meeting the common needs of men. These common needs of men are their daily bread, the comfort and pleasantness of their homes, the well-being of their children, and the ministry to their enjoyment of the sweet air and the green grass and the simple garden. Wherever any man devotes, to one of these minor and accidental uses, land which could support a man and his household, on which a home could be built, where fields might laugh with harvest, and supply a community with food, he breaks this obligation of appropriate use. Jesus set that truth in a single sentence which every landlord who has driven out men for the sake of sheep, or deer, or grouse, should have repeated to Him, "How much is a man better than a sheep?" There have been landlords who defended their conduct by the coarse plea

that it was more profitable to keep sheep and deer and grouse, than to keep men, upon the land. But this is open to question. It may have paid the single owner an immediately larger sum. In the long run the profit lies, as many estate owners know to-day, in the keeping of men upon the land. Whether it be profitable to the landlord's pocket or not, the economist points out that it is a deadly loss to the wealth of the nation. The statesman knows that it impoverishes the country in the most pitiless way. It robs it of the men and women who not only create its wealth but constitute its true riches. The coming land laws will so classify land that the land designed by nature for one purpose shall not be set apart to another and a selfish use.

The third truth is that the *land of a country is intended, broadly speaking, for its people*. Wherever laws fix their eyes on the landlord and the landlord's interest first, and not upon the people, as so many land laws have done, they do undoubted wrong. The wrongs which have been done especially in regard to agricultural land in the country are set down in history. Sometimes they have been done with the consent of the law, and sometimes under a skilful misinterpretation of it. The evictions of the cottars of the Highland glens and the seizure of the commons and downs of England and Ireland have been carried out by

applying laws intended to regulate the management of English lawns. There are certain wealthy landowning families who should remember the history of their possessions in time to prevent them making speeches which return like a boomerang on themselves. They may not be willing to play the part of Zacchæus, but they should not be too quick to cry "Confiscation and robbery" when some modern land law endeavours to restore to the people what their ancestors were sometimes given, without much right on the part of the giver, and sometimes took with a strong hand. This is certain, that whatever may be left by modern land laws to present land-holders, they will be allowed to retain it, only with such limitations as preserve the rights of the people in the land of the country to which they belong.

The extent to which the people have been deprived of access to the land, together with ownership and cultivation of it, are worth noting. Under our later land laws the people's rights have been largely ignored. The modern land question dates from the year 1845, when the gradual movement to present-day methods of ownership and cultivation was complete. The effect of this movement is marked in the fact that in the time of the Civil War, say 1645, there were 180,000 small freeholders in England with a population of five and a half millions of people. The New

Domesday book of 1873 shows that then there were less than 200,000 landowners above one acre out of a population of over thirty millions of people. That is to say in 1645 one in thirty possessed land, but in 1873, only one in one hundred and seventy of the population. But this does not represent the facts of the modern acquisition of land. Out of 33,000,000 acres of enclosed land, and this does not take account of mountain and strath and moor, 15,000,000 acres are estimated to be owned by 2250 proprietors. Of course were these proprietors devoutly Christian men, did they live on their estates and with their tenants, did they take a constant and a conscientious regard for the people who are under their law, and were they content with an ample, but not exorbitant, reward for their labour and their capital, keeping in mind both the wise use of the land and the well-being of the people, not many would question their ownership. Nor does any one question it bitterly where these conditions are fulfilled. But it need hardly be said here, that the instances of a flagrant and often profligate disregard of this ruling law, that the first concern of the land is the people, will compel the State to enact laws which shall prevent these wrongs.

It is sometimes urged and often denied, that the rush to the towns is greatly due to the heedlessness or greed of the landlords. To some extent

it is true. But we must not allow ourselves to forget the other causes for the decline of the rural population. The towns have a fascination of their own, especially for those to whom our modern education has given a new area of tastes. The cities have also made an industrial call on the people in the country. Labour-saving inventions and skilful machinery have made a large demand for labourers. The processes of manufacture employ many more persons in all populous countries than the procuring of the materials manufactured. The life of the city, also, with its brightness and gaiety and closeness of intercourse, exercises a constant charm. Besides these evident causes it must be remembered that the free import of foreign-grown wheat and other produce have made farming and the cultivation of land less profitable. This has been accentuated by the opening up of Western Canada, which tempts the people, born upon the soil and trained to agriculture, in an inevitable way. It may be quite true that there are many who willingly leave the toil and the silence of a country life for the exciting pleasures of the crowd.

But when we recognise all this it can be said, with absolute proof, that the country could still be kept full of men and women, if the conditions of life under just laws made that possible. Men would not leave their native land for Canada, with its

snowy winters, if the same opportunity were open to them here. There are always a large number of men who love the country life and never love any other. They leave it only with deep regret. They cling to its frugal fare, and its quietness, and all the joy of green fields, and wild nature, and rising sun, and harvest moon, with a deep and passionate desire. The self-excusing landlord who declares that he dispossessed tenants only from holdings on which they eked out a miserable existence is disguising some of the facts. These same tenants lived in a deep content. They practised honourable and devout habits. They brought up stalwart sons and comely daughters in the fear of God. When they were driven forth they left their lowly homes with tears, and some of the glens in the Highlands of Scotland still echo with the wailings of "Lochaber no more!" If it be true that the land will not keep both the man who cultivates it, and the landowner, in the cases where the land ought to be cultivated, it is not difficult to see which of these two classes must be eliminated by the law.¹

III

When we turn from the management and control of land in the country and the agricultural

¹ "If the rent is wrong, no amount of legislation in other directions will make the farm right" (Royal Commission on Agriculture, Blue Book C., 7625, p. 11).

districts to the town the problem becomes both more urgent and more difficult. To a certain extent it has been the violation of these ethical principles by the owners of the land in the country which has intensified, and sometimes created, the misery and the shame of the housing conditions in our great cities. But these are due, with all the sad train of consequences, more to the landlordism in the towns themselves, and especially on their borders, than to the short-sighted and selfish policy of some of the landowners of our straths and glens. When we realise what a modern industrial city is, with its narrow streets, mean backyards, closely crowded dwellings, dark and cheerless houses, and yet inquire into the rents the poor are compelled to pay, we find ourselves driven to inquire into the causes of a state of things which Christian ethics cannot allow to continue. One cause, and a large cause, is the exaction of the price of unscrupulous greed for the land on which the town must be built.

Now we must not forget that there are other causes besides this, of the heightened price of land, for the city slum, and the mean streets, and the overcrowded homes of the poor. These other causes, and especially the moral causes, are almost completely ignored by those popular writers who tell us of the people of the Abyss, and by those orators who declaim against the

rich. All these evils are not due to rapacious landlords. It is not easy, but it is possible and it is accomplished, to maintain a family in a cleanly and comfortable home in the midst of a slum quarter. All Christian visitors bear that testimony. Mr Charles Booth, in his seventeenth volume, proves it most conclusively. We must not forget that so long as drunkenness and sloth and improvidence, and their consequent vices, together with some of the unethical conditions of modern life remain, the slum, and the man who makes it, will be with us. Indeed civic corporations have found that when they clear out one slum, the people who have dwelt in it migrate to some other district of the city, hitherto cleanly and decent, and turn it into a slum in a week or two. These popular writers I have referred to, quote the figures of the houses to the acre, and the persons to the room, and especially of the death-rate among children, and set all these down to the debit of the exacting landowner. One favourite fallacy is to quote the figures of two wards in a city, where one is a ward full of working people with large families, and the other a ward of rich people who are often past the age of having families at all. But the heavy death-rate in the poorer ward, is more often due to evil conduct than to overcrowding or poverty. Alderman Broadbent made that fact clear by his experiment in 1906, when he

was Mayor of Huddersfield.¹ He offered to every mother, in his own Longwood Ward, £1 if her babe, born within his year of office, lived for twelve months. One hundred and twelve children were born, four died, and one left the district and could not be traced. The death-rate was thus 35 per thousand, or 44 per thousand, if the fifth child died. In the previous year the death-rate was 122 per thousand. This shows what the bribe of £1 did to increase the care of the children. It proved that the causes of infantile mortality are, to a saddening extent, moral and not material. The death-rate was brought down to the average of the better districts of Huddersfield. Of course besides this bribe of £1, visitors called regularly upon the homes to give the mothers hints as to the care of their children. But such visiting is carried on in every large city, and the visitors find that their suggestions are largely ignored, even when they are received at all. The same truth and many similar are set down in Miss Loane's careful and sympathetic and most discerning volumes on the moral conditions of the poor.

Yet when all this is allowed it cannot be denied but that the narrow streets, the over-built ground, the meanness of the rooms, and the meagreness and dejection of the back courts, with the overcrowding and the squalor are largely due to the

¹ Cf. *Lancet*, 17th Nov. 1906.

exactions of the landowner. I need not do more than recall this well-known fact repeated in numberless cases. A landlord has been leasing a few acres of ground for an agricultural rent, or has been letting them for temporary purposes. They are required for building homes for working people. He demands, and he gets a rent many times greater than he has been receiving, or than he has paid. That exaction must come out of the sweat and toil, sometimes alas out of the blood, of the poor. That conduct is a violation of the principles of stewardship, and of its companion principles as well.

IV

Now how are we to bring these principles into operation? The remedy that some suggest is that the land should be nationalised and the State become its sole owner. This method is combined with the idea of giving the individual some personal interest in the land allotted to him. Without that personal interest, and without some hope that its cultivator could benefit by its prosperity, it is difficult to see how State ownership could escape the evils which would make it so costly as to prevent it being worked at all. It is claimed for this method that there would be no unearned increment on the part of any landlord; that no longer would towns be constricted within narrow limits; nor would there be mean streets and

misshapen lanes ; and that the State would be an honest, and kind, and fair landlord.

This plan, like all of those which are large and comprehensive in ideal, is Utopian. While it fascinates, as Utopias do, it holds no solution when it is examined. Not even the most daring imagination has ever tried to show us how it could be applied to our present conditions. If this were a new country, with land still unbuilt upon, where one could draw his allotments out upon a map, some such method might be adopted. Yet new countries do not adopt it, because they have found that the best method of securing the opening up of the country, and the cultivation of the land, is to give some prospect of ownership to the individual. But apart from that initial difficulty there is this overlooked circumstance, in the case of the older country, that any disturbance such as would be required by the adoption of State ownership would be a revolution so great as to overturn our whole industrial system. The very hint of it would not only terrify wealth but scare away capital and make each man keep his little possessions entirely to himself. It would at once paralyse industry. As a recent coal strike taught England, such a disturbance would starve the poor in a week or two, and there is no arguing with hunger. We may dismiss such an idea from our minds, unless by some method so slow that several genera-

tions would gain no benefit, even if benefit could be securely prophesied.

Apart from this the practical difficulties both economic and ethical are insuperable. Some propose that the land should be confiscated, and argue that many of the great estates are unjustly held. But it must be remembered that a large number of the estates in the country, and all the land in the towns, have passed through a succession of possessors. The present owners may be getting, as many are, a very small return on the capital invested. To confiscate their property, and impoverish them for the sake of the State, revolts the conscience of a Christian community. To buy them out at a fair market price would involve an enormous tax, which a community, frequently objecting to fivepence a week under the Insurance Act, could not be got to bear.

Other suggestions, therefore, have been made to meet these insuperable difficulties. One of these is to tax the land to almost its full annual value. But this is only confiscation under another name. Besides, if it be a tax only on land, and not on the buildings upon it, its yield would not be so great as some men seem to think. The proposal of such a tax will at once lessen the value of the land. Although that might make its acquisition by the State the more easy, it

would mean the impoverishment of honest people, who had bought their land depending upon the maintenance of the laws. That proposal is so unjust as not to be open to Christian men.

Another plan is more adroit and seems at first sight to have justice behind it. It has been advocated by Dr Russel Wallace, who wishes to allow every landowner to leave his heritage to his son, or to his grandson, but after these three lives have enjoyed it, the land should become the property of the State. But again, those who advocate this proposal have to show why persons who have made their money in professional and industrial life, and invested it in land, should be dealt with so hardly, while those who have invested their money in manufacture, or in inventions, or in loans, should not also have their possessions taken from their children or their grandchildren. That would be equality of treatment. Any man who thinks that such wholesale dealing is as easy as the waving of a wand is not living in a world of realities.

But beyond all these ethical and economic objections to any form of land nationalisation, and laying aside all practical difficulties touching its inception, there is one barrier which is insuperable to the more thoughtful Socialist. That is that any system of land nationalisation would create a fresh government department. The experience of govern-

ment departments in managing property, or even of civic authorities on their small and easier scale of effort, does not give the assurance of economic advantage. It has never been cheap and frugal management. Without that neither the cultivation of land, nor its use for industry and for dwellings, can be made profitable. More vital still is the fact that it would create an immense army of officials, with autocratic power over the soil, and would give either to government, or to local councils, such an authority as would extinguish social and individual freedom. We are already groaning under officialdom in some departments of life. But an officialdom over the land would be worse than the most rack-renting landlord we have yet known.

We are, therefore, driven back to place our reliance on a progressive and sympathetic legislation, transforming the present social order so as to bring the landowner under the sway of the three ethical principles which have been laid down.¹ These principles lead us to work towards security both of tenure and of an adequate reward for the cultivator of the land. Ideally the man who works the soil should be the owner of it. But that is an impossible dream. We are led rather to the imposing of restraining laws on landlords who have hitherto made their own taste, or whim, or ideal, the only

¹ Pp. 203-208.

judge of how their land shall be dealt with, and their own somewhat imperfect conscience, the only authority on the conditions of use and of the rent they shall ask.

We shall hope also that our civic authorities will turn their attention to the homes of the people, and while not adventuring into any schemes of extensive building, frame laws which would secure that end. They could buy land on the outskirts of growing towns, at a cheap rate, as has been done in Dusseldorf and Mannheim in Germany. They could regulate the building upon these city lands. They could clear out the slums, and impose strict regulation upon the method of the keeping of the homes. They could extend their tramway lines so as to give a swift and cheap service to the more distant districts, and thereby continue that concentration of the industries, which seems inevitable, with a diffusion of the people over the land so as to give some measure of country life, and a larger share of health and of happiness. This is being done by philanthropy working on a sound actuarial basis. It could be done, if humbly and slowly attempted, by the whole community. All this can be accomplished without confiscating anyone's property, without imperilling social freedom, without making the individual a mere number on the roll, and without creating a costly and autocratic army of

officials. It aims at an ideal which is clearly outlined in the New Testament. That is the ideal of the garden city as described in the vision of the New Jerusalem as beheld by the seer of the Book of Revelation. That is the picture of what a Christian city shall be. Its broad streets, its shading trees, its crystal waters, its sunlit air, with its constant songs of praise, are the ideals we must aim at. Whatever prevents it, whether in landowner, or manufacturer, or workman, must cease. But let us not forget the one condition on which that vision can be realised. It can be realised only when the Lamb is the light of it, and there enters into it nothing that defileth or maketh a lie. Here, as elsewhere, the problem is ethical.

CHAPTER X

THE REVOLT OF WOMAN

WE have pointed out that our modern social unrest is manifested in three features—the claim for a more equal distribution of wealth; the demand of labour for a more adequate wage and an ampler leisure; and the revolt of woman. We now consider this last feature.

At the outset we may remark that it is doubtful whether the woman's movement is entitled to be termed a revolt. There is no general agreement amongst women in the demands made in the name of womanhood. There is a large number of women who are eager in making a variety of demands, and a few who are aggressive and violent in their endeavour to enforce some of them. There is an equally large number of women who are strenuously opposed, both to the claims which are made, and to the methods which accompany the demand for them. But there are no figures to declare the number who give silent consent, and the number who maintain a silent dissent. Even when the demands are articulate they differ widely in their ideal and their area. There are

some who claim no more than an enlargement of the duties and responsibilities which are recognised, at present, as within the sphere of womanhood. There are others whose ideal has been expressed by a witty woman writer as "the woman's purpose of making a man of herself."

The vast majority of women are not in revolt. They cherish the old ideals of a happy marriage, a home with sympathetic companionship, and motherhood with its sacred and ennobling duties. They are assured, from the fundamental and unchangeable nature of woman, that she is at her best and happiest, and that she does most for humanity, in that sphere. They have no sympathy with the heated and ignorant talk which describes that state as "A sexuo-economic basis of life." But they find that this ideal is not easily attained, is too seldom fully realised, and is impossible for many of the best of women. Home life has become more costly because of the higher standards of living, and the qualitating of tastes. Both sexes abstain from marriage because their conception of its fitting estate cannot be realised on present-day incomes. As they consider the number of well educated, finely trained, and eagerly intellectual women, not to speak of the greater number who have shared somewhat less fully in the modern evolution of womanhood, they are wistful for some change which would make life

fairer for all women, and easier and less dependent for those who have not seen their way to share the life of a home. That is the secret of the unrest of women. That is the dynamic behind the revolt.

This unrest is working in three spheres. The first is the sphere of the home life. The second is the sphere of the industrial system, with its inevitable questions of work and wages. The third is the sphere of the State and its activities. We may name these three spheres simply if we speak of the unrest of woman in the *domestic*, the *economic*, and the *political* order.

I

Before we consider these in succession, we shall do well to outline briefly the ideal of womanhood, and of woman's supreme duty, in Christian ethics. That can be done under two particulars. The first step is to understand the ideal type of woman as Christ has taught. That ideal type is summed up in the character and service of Mary of Nazareth. We do not mean to say that in temperament and in training, in gift and in aptitude, or in the actual details of life, every woman should be a replica of the Madonna Mary. But we read the Gospels, and the life revealed in them, and we learn what character and what kind of service the woman should maintain, whatever

may be her station or her education, so as to be ranked with "the most blessed among women." We realise that while there may be a place for women like Deborah or Judith, and although some may be called to occupy such exalted positions as Herodias and Bernice (without reference here, of course, to their moral character) these are unique and exceptional, and their duties are called for only from a few. When we speak of the ideal woman generally we see her typified by the character and the service of Mary, the mother of Jesus. We find her as the focus and ruling spirit of a home.

The second particular is that woman finds her imperative and supreme function within the family. Now the family is the indispensable unit in the kingdom of God. It is a common but inaccurate conception that, in Christian teaching, the only relationship to God is the individual relationship. That faulty conception is due to the preacher's natural appeal to the individual. But the larger truth is, that the Christian faith should be a family faith, for it cannot be practised apart from the family. The interests of the race, the producing and the perfecting of the Christian character, the well-being both of the Church and society, depend upon the Christian family. A Christian life may be lived apart from the family, but only for reasons which can be given to Christ. That isolated life cannot be so full-orbed, so human,

or so lovely as the life rich in relationships. It must always be regarded as the exception, not as the rule. The woman rises to her highest and realises her possibilities best in the family.

The proof of these two truths lies broadcast in Christ's teaching. To a greater extent than some modern women realise, womanhood owes the development of her nature and the high regard for her sex to Jesus Christ. The early believers were simply condensing one of Christ's principles into a phrase when they wrote, "In Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female." His deferences to women, His friendships with them, and his constant appeal to them, declare that He placed woman on an equality with man. But it is equally evident that His ideal of character and service is the woman in the home. No one can deny that the gospel conception of life at its happiest and usefulest is that of the Holy Family. In His greatest parable Christ exalted the conception of the infinite blessedness of the family relationship, when he described the prodigal as cherishing an unappeasable yearning for the shelter and felicity of the home. Christ's theology is a transfiguration of the family. It is an implicit declaration that earth has no relationship which is nobler or more satisfying than that within its circle of affection and sacrifice. There are one or two sentences in which Christ may seem to have be-

littled the family bond. But when He said that His mother and brethren were those who did the will of God, and when He declared that unless a man would forsake his father and his mother, his wife, and children, and lands, for His name's sake, he could not be a disciple, He was proclaiming, in the vivid Oriental way, the truth that nothing and no one must come in between Him and His disciple. On the cross, when He committed His mother to the care of His friend, He recognised the imperative obligations of the family. When He went down to Nazareth and spent His long years of subjection, He declared the family to be the nursery, and the school, and the sanctuary, of a religious life.

It is a natural consequent from this teaching that Jesus sanctioned and honoured the institution of marriage. He regarded marriage as the only basis for the family. He reaffirmed the word of all time, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and be joined unto his wife." He wrought His first miracle at the marriage of Cana in Galilee simply to prevent the marring of its joy. His interpreters have emphasised the closeness and inviolability of the relationship by declaring that the married state is the symbol of the relationship of Christ and His Church. It is in the light of this teaching as to the character and service and sphere of womanhood that the three

features of the modern movement must be scrutinised.

II

When we consider the sphere of the *domestic order* we mark how varied and diverse the modern demands are. Some would be content with a few changes in the laws governing the home and estate of marriage. Others have ceased to be loyal to the old ideal of the family. Some have reached the point of dispensing with it altogether. The advanced position has been expressed in this way: "A calm consideration of all the facts leads one to believe that the State as a whole is far more concerned in the production and control of children than either the father or the mother, and it would be the State, not the father, which will in future pay the mother the wage due for the work she spends on the child. It will give mothers a definite wage for their social service on exactly the same ground that any other work is rewarded. This will be the more easily carried into practice by the fuller development of that system of collective housekeeping which has already begun. It is not good that an intelligent woman should give up her whole time to the care of a single house of two or three children, who would be far better in the more varied society of a larger roof, which could be more economically done by a professional nurse,

who chose that work by preference. All these developments eventually may lead to the disappearance of the family as a social unit.”¹ There are other developments which go beyond this, and advocate such changes in the present ideal of fatherhood and motherhood, as to destroy them both in the recognised sense of the terms. The advocates of these changes frequently dispense with the term “motherhood.” They are content with the term “maternity,” which is a somewhat different thing.

Against such demands in the domestic order Christian ethics sets its unequivocal denial. No one who is governed by the ethics of Christ can sanction this ideal of life. Christ’s ideal of the man, and of the woman, and of the marriage state, and of the family, rises up with an Everlasting No. The primary aim of marriage in Christian teaching is the constitution of a home. Its only basis is a mutual affection. It must be a holy affection, a pure and purifying love, and not an erotic passion. Because it is love it is destined to endure, and to be the basis of an unbreakable bond. Because it is love it will observe all loyalties and rejoice in sacrifices. It will become more refined and more absorbing year by year. The blossom of a young and passionate delight will develop into the more satisfying fruit of a beneficent

¹ Cf. G. R. Stirling Taylor in *The Great State*, pp. 297-8.

fellowship. Above all, it must be marriage "in the Lord," *i.e.*, a marriage in which a common purpose of life, based upon a common faith, binds those who marry in the most sacred of bonds. It is sadly true that all marriages among professing Christians do not fulfil these conditions. But that is no reason for lowering the ideal. It is rather a reason for insisting upon it. The evident failure of the marriages which ignore this ideal only emphasise its truth. So that, within Christendom, nothing less can be accepted as the basis of life and of legislation. And any relationship between man and woman, which ignores that ideal, will only corrupt the sources of domestic well-being, and fatally injure the national life.

Yet the modern demand is that marriage should not be a thing of love, which has taken vows and set its hand to a contract, but a thing of love and of consent, without written obligation. It is, therefore, to endure only so long as the consent endures. In any day when consent fails the marriage should cease. This view bases itself quite frankly on the conception that love may change to dislike, or may find it has been mistaken, or that some circumstance may emerge which will justify the casting off of the man, or the woman, for a more desirable connection. It claims to occupy a higher moral position than that ideal which calls for the maintenance of the

contract of marriage. It draws gross pictures of that contract kept under circumstances which occasionally do occur, which bear a very small proportion to the great number of perfectly happy marriages. But, quite apart from this fact of the vast number of felicitous married lives, it is plain that a lax view of the marriage tie would have disastrous consequences. There are times, in most marriages, when some quite unimportant difference of opinion, or some argument as to a family policy, or some loss of temper, regretted in the next hour, might lead to a hasty and usually embittering separation. The recognised transiency of the bond would tend to fulfil itself, as it does in Mohammedan countries. It is sometimes urged that, in certain ranks of social life, among the dwellers in the mean streets, marriage by consent produces at times a happier life than marriage by contract. Both the man and the woman are aware of the frail tie and are afraid to strain it. Apart from the low moral level of that reason, this argument is specious, and carries no weight with those who have worked among these people who practise concubinage. They know how frequent are the ruptures, and how often the woman is flung off and deserted in difficult times and in her older years. Besides, there is nothing gained by comparisons between these examples of concubinage and examples of marriage

by contract, in which every obligation of Christian marriage has been left out from the beginning. Concubinage must be looked at in all ranks of life, and it should be compared with the multitude of happy marriages made by simple people, who realise that their love for each other is made more tender, and their bond to each other made more secure, by a public and binding vow which takes each other "for better, for worse."

There are still graver objections to this ideal of what has been called "leasehold marriages." The man who argues, as George Meredith is said to have done, that marriage should last for ten years, is either writing out of a bitter experience, such as he had, or he is not thinking what that means. A grave ethical injury is done to the man when his union with the woman is not regarded as sacred and enduring. The thought of union with some other woman is a constant temptation. Next to the relationship to God, that to the woman is most vital for the man's well-being. To regard the marriage state as one whose intimacies and tender-nesses should have a time limit would corrupt a man's thoughts at their source. Equally grave is the wrong done to the woman. By a law of her nature she clings to the man to whom she has given not only her affection but herself. The darkest tragedies of a woman's life are not her poverty, or any inferior social position, or any want of

opportunity to exercise her gifts. In the conceptions of the dramatists, verified by the experience of life among rich and poor, the woman's tragedy is the betrayal of her wooed and won affection. When one thinks of the fate of the woman, abandoned in some moment of caprice, or through some fit of temper, or because of a still baser passion, after her fortieth year, there can be nothing but amazement that any woman should wish to depart from the Christian conception of the sanctity and inviolability of the marriage bond. But if the ideal of leasehold marriage wrongs the man and the woman, it threatens a curse to the children. The breaking up of the home is to the child not only the marring of his happiness and the stinting of his education. It is the withering of his innocence, and the starving of his heart.

If Christian teaching affirms that the demand to alter the basis of marriage is denied by Christian ethics, it is compelled to deal with the question of divorce. Christ's view is simple and clear, for this question came up before Him. There were as many occasions for divorce then as now. The Pharisees had yielded to some of the temptations which are seducing the consciences of some modern sociologists. Christ declared that, unless for the one cause of infidelity, the marriage tie is indissoluble. That does not say that in rare instances separation for a time may not be both wise and dutiful.

But it does teach that, except for this single cause, marriage should be held as a bond to be kept while life endures. The whole New Testament Church, living in a world where some anticipations of modern views had already destroyed the family and corrupted the chastity both of man and woman, maintained this conception taught by its Master, and at length cleansed the world from a grossness of life which cannot be detailed to young ears.

One is well aware that other reasons for divorce are being urged. The recent volumes, published by the Royal Commission, are a storehouse both of the evidence which was led, and the reasons for the opposing conclusions which were reached. The chief reasons for a laxer view of divorce than Christ sanctioned are the hard cases, and the cruel wrongs which husbands and wives inflict upon each other. Yet it must not be forgotten that "hard cases make bad law," and to make divorce easy (though it might well be made cheap) will lead to the scandalous state of affairs in those countries where divorce is rashly undertaken, and lightly regarded, to the moral injury of the community. Any law which would give divorce on grounds of ill-temper, or ill-health, or lifelong sickness, or any visitation of mind or body which renders one of the parties helpless, would violate the Christian ideal. Such a situation in Christian ethics calls for enduring patience and meek

and enriching sacrifice. There are some wrongs, although grievous and afflicting, which should be forgiven, and the cross they place on the wronged one's shoulders should be patiently borne. It is by the carrying of the cross in any disappointing marriage, as in all else, that iniquity is purged away and wrongdoers are redeemed. To sum up, we maintain that any modern demand which implies a changed conception of the relationship to man and woman in marriage, and in the home, must be carefully scrutinised, and where it assails the conception given us in the New Testament it should be as unsparingly denounced as in the first century of the Christian story.

III

We pass on to consider the demand for woman in the *economic order*. This demand receives its concrete form in the claim for the economic independence of woman. This claim is largely motivated by the desire to make woman independent of marriage, and it denies that the family is the unit of the State. It regards man and woman as standing alone, and it makes the claim for the woman's economic independence that she may stand alone, whatever may be her relationship to the man. The suggestion is made that if the woman were quite securely independent she would stand apart from the man, in a large number of instances.

This view does not contemplate that "the production of children," to quote the coarse phrase of its advocates, shall cease. But it maintains that with economic independence the woman could determine when, and to whom, and under what conditions, she would produce the child. Mrs Humphrey Ward sums up in concise terms the ideas behind this claim. "Motherhood outside marriage, by means of temporary unions for the purpose; its formal recognition by society, and the conditions on which the 'new maids' of the future will claim and enforce it; arguments against the 'immoral' permanence of marriage; complete freedom of union under the guidance of passion between men and women; these matters, and the handling of them shed a flood of light on certain aspects of the woman's movement in our time."¹ All this is alien to the conception of wifehood and motherhood given us by Christ, and it sins against the well-being of the family and the child. But the point to note here is that such an ideal is dependent on the economic independence of woman.

Laying aside for a moment the practical and economic difficulties of the demand, let me remark on a strange darkness and a perverse conception of life which afflicts some of the advocates for

¹ *Letter to the Times*, June 19, 1912, quoted by Dr P. T. Forsyth in *Marriage*, p. 82.

the woman's economic independence. They speak and write as though the work of the woman in the home was less honourable, less ennobling, and less beneficial to the race and to society, than the work the woman can do outside the home, and in the market-place. The most detested word with some of these writers is the word "kitchen," and the work of the kitchen seems to be regarded as a degradation. The wife is sneered at as a "domestic servant." To keep a house, and to cleanse it, and to cook the meals for its inmates, but not to go down to an office or a factory, is to deprive the woman of her share in life. Why it should be thought a higher thing to go out to an office and sit upon a stool, or to go down and haggle in the market, or to bake bread in a factory, or to weave cloth in a mill, than to keep a home and train a child in honour and purity, and to maintain the courtesies of society, it is impossible to understand. The writer ¹ I am quoting seems to have some illusive and unreal view of the woman's life, outside the home, as a moving of multitudes by high speech and eloquent words, and as a passing in a procession, along a splendid highway, of conspicuous and ennobling duty. But even public life is not so very high a business after all, as those who are engaged in it know to their cost. It can

¹ *Women and Economics*, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, pp. 219-220.

be the occupation of a very few women, as it is the occupation of a very few men. The great mass of the women, who would secure economic independence, would turn their backs on the keeping of the home with its offices of love and tenderness, and be busy in the sordid and wearing drudgery of the mill, and the factory, and the cook-shop, or in the tedious labour of the industries of a commercial city, out of which both men and women are glad to escape into the redeeming atmosphere of the home.

But this question of the economic independence of woman has another and a more honourable side. One of the sad truths is, that woman's work is not paid sufficiently well so as to enable the majority of women workers to live comfortably on their wages. The increasing number of unmarried women is a difficult fact in our modern civilisation. The number of employments open to them is much greater than formerly, but it is still too limited. Sweated labour is largely woman's labour, although it must be remembered that sweated labour in factories is a thing of the past. The prices that are quoted, and the goods that are shown, as revealing a deplorable and heart-rending condition of women's labour, refer entirely to work done in a home, and in the privacy of a wife's fireside, into which no law may ever be able to penetrate. In spite of legislation and inspection

many women still toil for a starvation wage. Plainly, whether economic independence may be secured or not, under economic laws, an effort should be made to secure for women workers a wider area of employment and more adequate reward for their labour.

How this is to be done no one has been able to suggest. Two insuperable facts stand in the way. The first is, that the woman never can compete successfully with the man. Both for physical and for physiological reasons, which every woman knows, she is not able to do as much work as a man. Neither is she able to do all the kinds of work a man can do. In economic honesty she cannot claim the wages of a man in any occupation where his greater physical strength and his power of constancy enables him to produce more than the woman. The woman, therefore, can be given economic independence only as a matter of favour and privilege, except in those few cases where she has attained economic independence already. This law is so unbreakable that whenever the woman comes into competition with the man for the same work the man is preferred, even in the woman's own spheres of dressmaking and millinery. The still sadder proof can be noted in the other fact that women can get work only when they work more cheaply than men, and that their competition with men always lowers the rate of wages. In a

word, the general economic independence of women can be only artificially produced.

But a second reason is equally decisive. Under the present order, and under any order which anyone at present sees to be practicable, the wages of the man must be sufficient to enable him to support a family. Of course, if men are not to marry and if they may beget as many children as they please and throw them on the State from the hour of their birth, so that they have only to keep themselves, their wages may be small. Most men would be amply supplied at £1 per week. But if a man is to support his children and the mother of them (and any other ideal is ethically monstrous) he must be given a sufficient wage for that purpose. But the woman's wage, as a rule, should be large enough only to support herself, and, in the Christian ideal, to support herself only until she finds her true place as the wife and the mother in a home. Some of the writing which urges the economic independence of women in return for their labour, seems to forget the real condition of the woman after her fortieth year. The demand, in short, is based upon an impossible conception of society, and it will be found that most women, who attempt to argue it, are driven to the logical conclusion, that the woman should cease to be a wife and a mother altogether. "I admit, with all frankness, that I see no particular harm in leaving the sex and maternal instinct in

woman to die out of its own feebleness, to perish in its own inertness.”¹ But nature and the facts of life mock at such cheap and flippant talk, and will not allow the woman to gain so paltry an end, and so desecrating a condition as economic independence, at the cost of impotence.

There are, no doubt, in modern life hard cases where a woman has to support herself through all her years, and still harder cases where she must support others cast upon her care. Yet it is noteworthy how many women even under present conditions succeed in solving these difficult problems. Something more might be done by laws which would confine certain occupations to women. A large number of the staffs in banks and business houses and the major number of the workers in warehouses might be women. But any interference in such a direction is artificial, and ought not to be lightly entered upon. It might do more harm than good. Two things we must remember. One is, that we cannot juggle with economics, and ordain, by statute, a wage which is above the value of the work done. The second is, that neither by nature, nor by Christian ethics, were men and women meant to be independent of each other, either socially or economically. Paul set this truth clearly when he wrote, “Nevertheless, neither is the

¹ *Women in the Great State*, Miss Cecily Hamilton, p. 234.

man without the woman ; neither is the woman without the man, in the Lord."

IV

When we touch the woman's demands in the *political order* we touch a concrete and imminent question. This demand for a larger share in government and administration has been accepted in municipal life, but it is denied in political life. Its urgent form to-day is the right to exercise the franchise in the election of members of Parliament. Most advocates of this demand are motivated, not only by the new ideal of woman and her place in the State, but by a sincere belief that the influence of women expressed in this direct way would be of high ethical value.

There is nothing in Christian ethics directly to deny this claim. The place given by Christ to woman may be urged as favouring it. Whether we think it wise and expedient or not, we must recognise that its source is the Christian ideal of women. The Christian Church has placed women, so far as its franchise is concerned, on a level with men. Any denial of office or function is based upon expediency, not upon absolute right. If, therefore, Christian ethics are to be claimed as adverse to this demand of women, that must be proved by scrutinising its reasons in the light of the Christian ideal rather than under the guidance of direct precept.

The reasons usually given to justify the demand are these. One is the plea of equality, that as woman is the equal of man, women who pay rates should be upon an equality with other ratepayers. Another is, that the causes in which women are especially interested are not understood by men, that they have been shamefully neglected, and that in the making of laws both the woman's point of view and the woman's disadvantages have not been kept in mind. Another is, that the paramount interest women have, not only in the State but in the moral condition of humanity, and especially in the well-being of the child, makes it imperative that they should be given the power of directly influencing the counsellors of the State, and the minds which frame its laws. Another reason is, that there are an unusual number of most competent women, highly educated, keenly interested in social well-being, singularly able to deal with public questions, and that it is an evident wrong to deny the franchise to them, when it is given to some crude-minded, unlettered, unthinking man. Another reason is, that while it may be true that there are some services the woman cannot render to the State, there are others the woman alone can discharge, and that, on the whole, sex should not be a disability in political life.

Against these reasons an opposing case is presented in this way. To begin with, the plea of

abstract justice is denied. There is no abstract justice either for a man or a woman to exercise the franchise, whether taxed or not. The franchise is not a natural right. It is an artificial function. It is given to a man, not because he is a man, and confined to a man, not because he is a man, but on the ground that it is better for the State to confine the franchise to the male sex. The one reason which is undeniable for granting, or refusing, the franchise to a man or a woman, or to any class or section, is the well-being of the State. Suffragists maintain that it would be good for the State, and for men and women as well. Upholders of the present conditions support an opposite conclusion, and affirm that it would injure the State, and especially the woman. Plainly, there is no abstract right to a vote. While women may urge a plea of equality, their plea of justice is not admitted. It may be just to deny it.

Therefore other pleas are brought into the argument. It is maintained that it would not be good for woman to be brought into the heat and dust of the political arena; that the peril of an opposition of the sexes on some questions is too great to be risked; and that the charge that men will not represent the woman's case aright, or give attention to her interests, or be moved by her conscience in moral questions, is both inaccurate and unjust. It is further declared that

the prophecies of the good effect of extending the franchise to women have not been fulfilled in other countries. It has been found, in Australia and New Zealand, that women are as partisan in politics as men, and that they are moved by the same prejudices and passions. Those who have succeeded in enrolling women as voters have been disappointed both by the numbers taking part in elections, and by their indifference to the higher moral issues. That is to say, the argument that the woman's franchise will work for the good of the State is not sufficiently proved.

Beyond these objections there are practical difficulties. One of these is the peril of adding so large a number of electors by a single measure. To enlarge the electorate by six millions, or it may be eleven millions, would place the balance of power in the hands of women. To confine it to a few, the wealthy and the well-placed and the idle, as some desire, is to exclude the mass of working women, who are in greater need of consideration by the State. To give it to wealthy and idle women and to deny it to their poorer sisters would violate both equality and justice. Beyond this, it is urged that the great mass of the present electors, and the greater number of women, are opposed to granting the franchise. The recent elections to Parliament, and the hostile reception given to the advocates of woman's suffrage, are in

favour of this assertion. This objection does not settle the question as an ultimate demand, but it removes it from the sphere of practical politics until a majority of electors have been convinced of its wisdom and necessity.

But within the last year a greater obstacle has arisen. The violence and the lawlessness of what is known as the militant section of the suffragettes, have not only roused both a silent fear, and an open antipathy, but have caused large numbers to change their minds as to the expediency of giving women political opportunities. Of course no one, who has the least acquaintance with Christian ethics will for one moment allow any justification for the arson and mischievous destruction of innocent people's property, and for the peril to life, which the militant suffragettes exult in. No one who takes any part in such doings can claim Christian sanction. That is not the way of Christ at all, even when suffering the most grievous wrong. But such conduct has produced a state of mind not merely of protest against it, but of conviction that there are among women an increasing number who have not sufficient self-control to be of service in public life, and that these women are to be found in large numbers among the wealthy and well placed and idle, among the very class for whom this demand is most emphatically made. It is not that they are roused to indignation by

the irrational and hysterical outrages of a few. It is that they begin to see that such women are numerous, and that they would import into political life an element of passion which would endanger the well-being of the State. It is idle to urge that if they were given the franchise such methods would no longer be adopted. It is quite clear that there might come a division of opinion on some law, which would involve some question women of this type might regard as more sacred than the possession of a vote, and hysteric passion would vent its cunning and crafty violence in every public meeting to which such women were admitted. It may be that in course of time women will learn to have control and patience in confronting public denials. But in the meantime their demand, under this changed mind, has been denied. It is a sincere sorrow to many, who, like the present writer, once cherished high hopes from the introduction of the woman's mind and the woman's moral instincts into public life, to find themselves in doubt as to the wisdom of granting this demand, and compelled to support the necessity of quelling a lawless revolt.

V

All these questions of the spheres of womanhood reach their climax in the care and training of the child. In a true sense the well-being of the child

is the *terminus ad quem* of our domestic, economic, and political life. The problems of the woman and her claim, and of the home and the family, can be settled only in the light of their issues in the well-being of the child. The modern passion of pity is aroused to extreme compunction when men think of the sufferings of children. In the end, the laws, which are yet to be, will refashion the domestic, industrial, and political order so as to give the child its meed of gladness and its door of opportunity.

Now there are certain offices toward the child which the State alone can adequately fulfil. Many of our most thoughtful men and women are giving their lives to this public service. It is the high motive which beats in the heart of our educationists.¹ We need our schools more systematically organised so as to develop the diverse gifts of children.¹ We must face the problem of the training of the adolescent. We seem to be ripe for the requirement of a year of compulsory training for our youth, so as to purge the hooligan out of some of them, and train the coming generation in physical, intellectual, and moral discipline. We need, and here we touch the problem of problems in this respect, not only an ethical, but a religious education. But all this is subordinate or, at the most, in addition to what must be done

¹ Cf. *Education and the National Life*, Dr Henry Dyer.

by the woman for the child. Every claim for womanhood, and every duty laid upon her, along with every claim for manhood and every duty laid upon him, must be judged by its effect upon the child. In a true sense the whole outward duty of one generation is to produce and to train the next generation, and to ensure that its life will be better and nobler than that of the generation before.

This leads us to see how ethically imperative it is that a woman's mind and heart should be focussed upon the child, as Nature, and, may I say, God intended. However some women may be inclined to make light of their sex, and to speak of cutting the tie between the babe and its mother at birth, that cannot be done without a penalty which falls on the child and does it an irreparable wrong. We are not called upon here to deal, except by a passing remark, with the delicate and complex question of eugenics. Its aim is ethical, but some of the methods suggested are merely animal. The prevention of the curse which rests upon many children from before their birth ought to be seriously sought. But it is not so certain as some seem to think that men and women can be bred as animals are bred. It is not evident that the mating of fine physical specimens of manhood and womanhood will produce noble men and women. Manhood and womanhood are not

merely length of limb. Besides, modern physiology has discerned that heredity is not so potent as a crude medical science has been accustomed to declare. Only diseases which affect the plastic germ have been found to injure the child vitally and seriously. These diseases are two in number. The first is due to the intemperate use of alcohol, and the second to another vice. How these two vices are to be completely prevented, and how the second of them is to be dealt with effectually, no one has suggested, because no one knows. Beyond this limitation of transmission of evil, it is now more fully recognised that nature is always restorative. The suggestion, therefore, that certain persons should be prevented from marrying by some drastic surgery does not meet with the sanction of any who have patiently considered the whole case and fairly estimated the evils lamented. Apart from the fact that such an interference with liberty, especially in affection and in sexual choice, is a return to a lower ethical state for the individuals, it casts a moral shadow on the whole community. There is no way here but to accept the teaching of Christ. Not by mutilation, either of body or spirit, can health and virtue be secured. Christ's way is the only one. It may seem to be slow in action, but all ethical progress is slow. Jesus condensed it into a single phrase, "Make the tree good and his fruit good"

This appeal of the ethical ideal to the woman to focus her mind and heart upon the child, is the point of urgency and hope. The child's future, and its physical and mental and moral well-being, are more dependent upon the environment of its first seven years than upon any other factor. In this regard at least, environment is vastly more important than heredity. But the only ethical environment for a little child is the family. Those persons who are maintaining that a large State nursery for babies and children is better than a home, and that the mother will be advantaged by being robbed of her child, after she has brought it forth, and the child benefited by becoming one of a roomful, or hallful, of other babies, do not know what they are talking about. This incubator system denies and defies both the heart of motherhood and the right of the child. Mr Lecky¹ traces part of the corruption of Rome to the fact that the richer women committed their children to the care of servants, as is done to their infinite loss by some fashionable women to-day. Rousseau slipped his five babies into the receiving box of the Foundling Hospital, as soon as they were born, and half crazed the poor creature who was the mother of them. In this particular, although in little else, Rousseau was a consistent Socialist.

¹ *History of European Morals*, vol. II. chap. v.: "The Position of Women."

The records of the French Foundling Hospitals show an enormous death-rate, although skill and care are lavishly bestowed. The little children miss the mother companionship, the mother voice, and the mother touch. The hideous failure of all attempts at bringing up children in public institutions, in spite of the self-sacrificing devotion of many of those who serve in them, might check the ardour of these advocates of breeding establishments and public nurseries.

It was not a stroke of genius but a deep insight into the mind of Christ, empowered by his own orphanhood, that led William Quarrier, in founding the Orphan Homes of Scotland, at Bridge of Weir, to insist that the poor waifs and strays he found in the streets of Glasgow should be placed in houses of limited size, under the care of a foster-father and foster-mother, who should create a home, and weld the children into a family. The first duty of womanhood is the service of the child. The one method of performing that service is the maintenance of a home. Any claim made by women, or for women, must be tested by its effect upon the child, and primarily on the child which she has borne. But the home and the family can only be successfully produced by a marriage of mutual love and mutual dependence, issuing in a relationship where both the man and

woman unite in the discipline of the young. Nothing else will so retard the coming of the kingdom of God as a violation, in any way, of woman's highest instinct and noblest office of motherhood in the queenly realm of the family.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL REFORMS

THE many-sided problems of social unrest come home to men's business and bosoms, and, therefore, touch every human interest. Not only the man in the market-place and the women in the home, but the economist and statesman, the philanthropist and moralist, find themselves compelled to answer its questions. The Christian Church, with its mission of healing the moral diseases and remedying the moral wrongs of the time, cannot escape the duty of facing the issues of our social ferment. To know the obligations of the Church and to be assured of its methods of service is an imperative duty.

All men are agreed that the Christian Church cannot stand coldly aloof. That is prevented by the fact that the problems of social unrest are ethical at the root, and that the only possible solution is an ethical solution. When we ask why inequality in wealth and in wages and in hours of labour should not exist, we have no answer apart from ethics. When we ask why there should not be rich and poor there is only the ethical reply. When we ask, again, why capital should not use

labour in the way most profitable to itself and without paying more heed to the labourer than to see that he is kept efficient, there is no reason except an ethical reason. Or when we inquire why the land should not be held in possession by a few prominent persons there is no valid reason outside the teaching of Christian ethics. Economics has no condemnation of any one of these things. The first object of economics is the production of wealth. In its view that plan is wisest and most reasonable which produces most wealth. The second object of economics is the distribution of wealth. But it has no approval of any mode of equal distribution, and it must be ever on the watch lest any method of distribution injure the production, and so decrease the flow, of the stream of wealth which is, and must remain, the economist's chief concern. The creed of Adam Smith is the creed of the ruthless economist. It is the creed which believes that, through human selfishness, supply and demand will regulate themselves, and the wealth of the community, which is the end kept in view, will most increase. But ethics has been challenging this economic doctrine, and that is one of the reasons of our social unrest.

Nor, again, is there any reason, on merely economic ideals, why these inequalities should pass away. A social system in which one man is a despot, is quite consistent with natural reason. The Oriental caliph who holds all men's lives in his

hand, and is often a successful ruler, is regarded as right and praiseworthy beyond the bounds of Christendom. A social order, built upon slavery, or upon the employment of men and women who are merely "hands," can be defended successfully on economic grounds. The ideal in such a system, when properly administered, is not to be too lightly condemned. But all of these ideals are reprobated by Christian ethics. It has taught the infinite value of the soul, the equality of all men before the law, the obligation laid upon privilege to pay a ransom to the unprivileged, and to use its advantages for the common good, with the special duty of caring for the man who is down. It has implanted a new sense of justice and a deeper passion of pity in men's hearts. As a consequence the only possible solution is ethical. When that is realised the duty of the Christian Church is of supreme moment.

I

When we survey the usual answers to this questions of the Church's obligations we are struck by their diversity. They fall into three classes. Some maintain that the Church to-day should deal with all the issues in social unrest and speak with an authority, which it should enforce by a stern discipline upon its members. Those who make this claim are usually much given to denunciation

of riches and ease and luxury, and they are quick to charge Christian Churches and Christian men, who reject their counsels, either with callous hard-heartedness, or with being on the side of capital, or with cowardice. A second class are as pitiful and even more philanthropic, as eager in social service and as out-spoken in political life, but they declare that the Church has no right of entry into this sphere. These two extremists represent only small constituencies. The great mass of Christian men and women are sure that the Church has imperative obligations. But they are also sure that these obligations can neither be known so easily, nor discharged so instantly, as some hot-heads seem to think.

Now it must be said, at the outset, that the Christian Church cannot be heedless of any moral wrong in the State or community, any more than in the individual. No injustice between class, no preventable disparity between East and West, no enmity between employer and employee, no moral sore on the body politic, can be allowed to pass unregarded and to continue unhealed. The answer to the ignorant taunt that the modern Church plays the part of the Priest and Levite, and passes by on the other side is easy and decisive. It is only a piece of humour to describe the sturdy members of the Labour Party, and the self reliant thousands of the aggressive Trades Unions, eager for larger wages and ampler leisure, as the man who fell among

thieves. The closer analogy is with the man who took his fellow by the throat, with the demand "Pay me that thou owest." Yet apart from this distinction the broad truth is that no other society plays the part of the Good Samaritan so sympathetically as the Christian Church. The most generous charities, the most patient and delicate helpfulnesses to the widow and the orphan, the sick and the poor, come either directly from the Church, or indirectly from those it teaches and inspires. But the duty of the Church is not exhausted when it fills the role of the Good Samaritan. Our problems go far beyond the case of the poor and oppressed by the way.

Let us begin by asking, What is the Christian Church? It is a society founded by Christ, composed of men whom He has called out of the world and gathered round Him to be a witness to Him. It is the sanctuary of His worship, and the instrument of His Spirit. It is the organ through which the great truths of God and of the meaning of the words and life and passion of Christ are declared. Its officers have been set apart, by solemn vow, to duties aptly defined as "The word, sacraments, and prayer." Speaking comprehensively, and in the terms we have been using, it is the special agency designed to bring in the kingdom of God.

Keeping that definition in mind, let us answer

two questions. The first is, What is the first line of its duty? It is to win men to Christ, to bring them into touch with God, to refine and perfect their character so as to make them citizens of the kingdom. Every one can realise that, if all men were children of the Father in Christ's sense, social unrest would be at least manageable. Many of its sources would pass away. Every one of its problems would become less acute. It cannot be said too often, that without good men, a good State is impossible. However men may adjust the machinery, and amend the laws, nothing will be attained until the citizens are living on a higher moral plane. Mr H. G. Wells writes with more wisdom than he has shown in his later works when he declares: "I recognise quite clearly, that with people just as they are, with their prejudices, ignorances, misapprehensions, their unchecked vanities, greeds and jealousies, their crude and misconstrued instincts, their irrational traditions, no Socialist state can exist—no better state can exist than the one you have now, with all its squalor and cruelty."¹ That is only a strong and terse way of stating what Christ taught, and what the Christian Church must maintain. Its first line of duty is to make better men, and to change men's minds, in order that the better state may be built among us.

¹ *New Worlds for Old*, p. 219.

What that means practically can be seen written large in the centuries. It can be considered in every community where the Christian spirit prevails. It can be clearly observed in every Christian home. It is not often that the dramatist and the writer of fiction engage their minds with the presentation of the effect of this work of the Church. But those who know the conception in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," and any who have read "The Day that Changed the World" will have a picturesque presentation of what it would mean, to the home and the social order, if this first line of duty were fulfilled. The claim of the Church is that the day that changed the world was the day of the Cross. To proclaim that truth is the Church's unquestioned obligation. If she neglect this line of duty, to make her courts places of discussion over economic or industrial problems, or if she set her preachers to proclaim the rights of the workman to a minimum wage, or if she turn her officers into a distress committee, her candlestick shall be removed. Nay, if the Church even imperil her fitness for this first function, by interfering in the economic strife of labour and capital, she will fail to fulfil her one highest imperative, and she will no longer deserve or receive the respect of conscientious men. The Church's first duty is not to make laws, not to lobby public questions, not to pronounce on the matters of hours and wages, not to

play policeman in the streets, but to make men of faith.

What is the second line of duty for the Christian Church? It is to teach the ethics of Christ and to perfect men in their practice. It is to expound the principles taught by Christ and to apply these principles to the lives of men. They must be brought to bear not only on individual men, but on men in all relationships of life. Man, ethically, consists of conscience and will. Character is the result of conscience and will in right action. This second line of the Church's duty may, therefore, be described as the enlightening of the conscience and the strengthening of the will to Christ-like decisions. When the Christian man's conscience has been made quick and sensitive to right and wrong, he will not need to be roused to action on particular questions. All he requires beyond that will be given by the masters in these questions. When a Christian man's will has been disciplined to choose righteousness at all cost, he will do so in his home, and business, and politics, without the drill sergeant's word from the pulpit. Were every Christian man living in the world with eyes wide open both to good and to evil, his conscience quickened to see the path of his own obedience, and his will strengthened to walk in it, the strife between capital and labour would not last for a week, and the revolt of woman, seeking a worldly sphere and a selfish economic

independence, would die within every Christ-like heart.

II

With these conclusions most men who think about the Church at all will generally agree. But there are some issues about which there may be disagreement, and many may be less than sure about the application of these leading principles to them. Most men are inclined to believe that the Church, in spite of such distinctions as have been made, should promote these recognised ends of the kingdom of God, and should touch them with directness and authority. To that it may be said that undoubtedly there are many questions which the Church may touch, and the Church should touch. But, and this is vital, it must not travel out of its own sphere. Still more important—it must employ only its own methods. These methods are not the methods of the State. They are methods which can be learned from the conduct of Christ.

In support of this statement, let me point out that many of the provinces formerly imperative on the Church have been occupied by the State, and there is now neither need nor room for the Church to deal with them. As Dean Church¹ has pointed out, Christendom is a reality, and our

¹ *Gifts of Civilization*, chaps. I., II., III.

modern civilisation is dealing with many of the social evils which were once the sole care of the Christian Church. It is dealing with them more effectually than the Church could do. Were we living in a heathen land, such as Central Africa, the Church would be called upon to interfere in almost every question of law and government, health and cleanliness, decency and morality, as it need not, and must not, in Christian lands. The magistrate is not required to play the part of the policeman, nor the Christian minister in the homeland the part of the medical missionary or the artisan missionary. Neither is the Church called upon to directly interfere in many of the questions which occupy the mind of the legislator, or to share in a large number of the duties which fall to a Town Council, whose members, nevertheless, he continually influences in conscience and in will. The Church has no more right to talk about depreciation of gold, or bimetallism, or free trade, or tariff reform, than to give lectures on anatomy, or the wonders of the South Pole. Nor has she any right to tell an employer what wages he should pay, or how many hours his employees should work, any more than to tell the employees what laws they should draw up in their Trades Unions, or how they ought to apportion the spending of their income. There are persons and societies who should take to do with these things, but not the

Christian Church, or the Christian minister. If he succeeds in quickening the conscience and resolving the will by the word and example of Christ, employers and employees will settle these questions for themselves, without requiring the Church's arithmetic.

Beyond this evident limitation, there remains the practical question of fitness. All these industrial and economic relationships are involved and intricate beyond the understanding of the average minister. Few men will dare to say that they understand the questions of worth and value, the laws of trade, and the conditions of manufacture, much less the subject of capital and labour. Those who have given years of study speak most humbly and diffidently. How many men in a million, or how many Church courts in a hundred, are able to interfere with helpfulness, or to do more than declare the broad principles of the ethics of Christ? When some unthinking people retort that the Christian minister ought to be educated in these complex industrial questions, they are talking nonsense. The training of a student of theology, with its requirements in languages, Church history, dogmatics and apologetics and ethics, and its discipline in literature, and art, and in practical service, is already a seven or eight years' burden. Besides, economists are born not made. The man who expects the Christian Church, through its

officers or even through its most efficient and usually over driven teachers, to deal directly with our bewildering industrial questions, is expecting a needless and foolish miracle. The Christian Church must not yield to the thoughtless clamour for interference in these spheres. It is not "a judge or a divider" over men, any more than was its Master.

If any one should think that this restriction of the sphere of the Church on social questions renders her impotent, there is clear proof that he is mistaken. He is mistaken precisely as the man is mistaken who thinks that he who digs about the roots of the tree is doing nothing, because he is not hacking at the unsightly branches. It is an historical commonplace that the social well-being of the people, the marked changes in the laws and customs of trade, the liberation of the slave, the uplifting of womanhood from her degradation, the more tender care of the child, and the more generous treatment of the disadvantaged and the downtrodden, have followed upon the great revivals of religion. In these revivals the Church concentrated her energies upon her own supreme business. She brought men to Christ, and she laid upon them the sacred duty of the Christ-like character. When that had been done the generation, so renewed in spirit, rose up with a new moral passion, to reform, in the social, industrial, economic, and political spheres the wrongs then seen and hated. After

the Reformation in Europe, the social well-being of the people took a forward stride whose greatness only students of history understand. After Wesley roused England from her Pagan apathy, the condition of the people was vastly improved. Out of the intense and keenly evangelical religious fervour of "the Clapham Sect" there issued that philanthropic movement which resulted in the freedom of the slave, and the deliverance of the factory operative from as bitter a bondage. Were the Christian Church to succeed in bringing home to men the great certainties, until, on the one side, the rich were unable to remain hedged up in their riches, heedless of how they were gained; and on the other, the poor were imbued with a new hope and joy in God, and a new content with their outward lot, both rich and poor would meet together in a justice and a charity, which would create the atmosphere wherein alone social unrest can be healed. When the Christian Church educates the conscience and reinforces the will for righteousness, she is doing more to reform the social order, than if she were to place an economist in every pulpit, and to interfere with authoritative voice on every public question.

III

If there be spheres which the Christian Church has no need to enter, and other spheres where her

interference would be unwise, and if there be methods which she should not employ, we are left with the question of those avenues and means which are her rightful and dutiful modes of service. It is clear that the Christian Church comes into contact with social unrest in three ways—through her *individual members*, her *Church courts*, and her *ministers*. Let us endeavour to delimitate the spheres of the action of each of these.

There is practically no limit to the service which may be done by the *individual members* of the Christian Church. Simply because he is a Christian the man who is a citizen, and a resident in a parish or district, and a voter, must unsparingly devote himself to realising the kingdom of God. If he has any gift and aptitude for public office, it is his most Christian duty to seek it, and to discharge his conscience in its service. Most men who observe public life are persuaded that we are more in need of better law-givers, than of better laws, and of more upright counsellors than of more regulated arrangements. We cannot have a Christian State until the men who administer its affairs are Christian. It can be said therefore, in a single word, that while there are obvious limitations in the interference of the Church, it is the business of the Churchman to enter every sphere of public duty, and to endeavour to apply Christ's principles to all social questions so as to bring in the kingdom of God.

When we consider the duties of the *Church courts* we are on less secure ground. A Church court has been appointed for a certain definite function, and if it endeavour to fulfil any other function, or if it attempt any alien function, it will fail of the end for which it has been created. The first duty of the Church court is obviously the care of the organisation and worship and service of the Church, and the oversight of the Christian life of its members and its people. But there is open to it a sphere of public service which the individual Christian is not able to discharge. Obviously it should avoid the discussion of political questions, not merely because these divide its members, but because there are many other quite efficient agencies, especially those of the Press and the platform, where these can be adequately considered. It is forbidden likewise to enter upon the questions which are strictly economic, and demand a critical and balanced knowledge of the laws of trade and industry. But because it is the collective voice of the Christian Church, and because it can be uttered after counsel has been taken, the Church court has a duty of pronouncing upon the ethical import of all proposed legislation, of all civic regulations, and of the administration of the laws of the land. It should insist that economics must be ethical. It should insist that laws shall not imperil the liberty of conscience, or the freedom

of religion. It should insist that no legislation shall encourage any laxity, or self-indulgence, or discourage the finer instincts of the people. Where there are laws of commerce which break Christ's commandments, where there are customs which injure the young, oppress the feeble, wrong the poor, corrupt either the minds or the bodies of those who toil, where there are tyrannies of rich over poor, or of poor over rich, where there is any invasion or infringement of ethical righteousness by the laws of the land, or in their administration, there the voice of the Church, by its courts, should never fail to be heard. But this voice must speak only within the sphere of ethics, and any heady denunciation of riches as riches, employers as employers, or of workmen as workmen, is an offence against society and against the command of Christ.

To make this matter clear it is quite obvious that all temperance legislation should be considered by the courts of the Church, that every attempt to change the relationships of the man to the woman and the basis of the home, and that all laws which tend to injure either religious liberty or religious life ought to be scrutinised and pronounced upon. It is equally clear that the keeping of a day of rest, the continuing of any class of house in which life can be neither cleanly nor honourable, the permitting of conditions which endanger both the

physical well-being and the moral health of the community, should be brought under the review of the courts of the Church, and wherever their ethic is alien to the mind of Christ, it should be pointed out, without wounding words, and wherever their ethics is Christian in spirit, it ought to be as openly commended. This manifold duty would have been more fully and more efficiently discharged if there had not been too many occasions where political bias, on both sides, sought to misuse some court of the Church. The penalty of such misuse is to destroy the power of the Church court, to fulfil its strictly ethical and religious function.

When we come to the methods of the *Christian minister*, we enter upon ground which has been occupied by debate. Yet it seems to me that his sphere can be most clearly outlined. There are three limitations which every Christian minister ought to accept. These limitations imply that his individual service toward the problems of social unrest is much more limited, than that of the Church courts, and very greatly more limited, than that of the individual member.

The first limitation is that he must not use his pulpit, or the hour of public worship, to discuss public social questions. He may believe, for example, that the wage earners in a certain industry are not receiving a due share of the profits, that the hours of labour in certain employments

are too long, that the present economic method of distributing wealth is unfair. He may be assured that the economic independence of women is a necessity. He may plead that since all these questions have an ethical interest, and have an ethical solution, it is his duty to discuss them from his pulpit. We have considered already how the ethical aspect of them can be enforced, without directly touching them at all. But should our preacher not be convinced of the value of such method of treatment, there remain objections which are insuperable. The man who makes these topics the subjects of discussion in his pulpit sins against the men and women who have come to worship. He makes an unfair use of an occasion when he has been given the right of speech without reply. He can only stir up a quite honest resentment against the view he urges, and do it more harm than good. There are times and seasons and places, where he might claim the liberty to utter his opinion. It may become his duty to do so, let who will be offended. But in the time of public prayer he should content himself with the broader and larger ethics, resting assured that, if he can make clear what Christ meant the lives of man and woman to be, the application of his teaching to present-day circumstances will be made by the silent consciences within.

A second limitation seems equally evident. The

Christian preacher who is called upon to be a minister of the gospel should refrain from taking up any of these questions lest he shut men's minds against his message, and lest he lessen his time and energy for his more unique and more urgent business. There have been times, and these may recur, when the Christian minister may be compelled to stand forth and proclaim some canon of public duty which is being violated. That time is not now. No Christian minister can plead that the world is not full of voices, in the press and in the current literature of the day, and much more from the platform, busy with this very thing. Sometimes the devotion of the minister to this interference in public and social questions, has been defended on the ground that he is following in the example of the Old Testament prophets. The great names of Isaiah, and Amos, and Hosea, are called up in defence of this conception. But that is the fallacy of the ignorant or the unthoughtful. The Old Testament prophet and the New Testament minister have been given two different functions. The Old Testament prophet lived in a theocratic state. He was the statesman and politician of the time. It was his bounden duty to deal with the public questions of the day, to enter into conference with the king and his counsellors, and to discuss political alliances with other peoples. His successor, in modern days, is the minister of the crown, or the

member of Parliament, or, more nearly, the publicist and journalist. If any minister wishes to become a prophet in that sense, and if he feels the burden of our social questions on his conscience as his urgent duty, his course is clear. He has only to resign his charge, and devote himself to what he is quite entitled to say is a high and honourable and Christian service. But he need not think to remain in the ministry, where his bounden duty is to preach the gospel and to teach the ethics of Christ for the creation of Christian character, and yet, under the plea of being "a prophet," play the statesman and politician on social questions. Prophet he may claim to be, but only after the New Testament pattern, after the order of Paul and Barnabas, and Silas, and Timothy, and those unknown saints who travelled through the early Christian Churches calling men to the faith of Christ, but sedulously abstaining from social and political questions. The man who claims the right to interfere in public questions injures his Christian ministry.

A third limitation is still more evident. Whenever a social question has entered the political stage of its history, the Christian minister should leave it, if at all possible, entirely alone. It should be barred from pulpit treatment. He should not mix himself up with its discussions in political assemblies. No Christian minister can allow his

freedom as an individual, and his duty as a citizen and a voter, to be infringed. But he holds a sacred office. He has been called to be the guide and teacher and comforter of men in the things of Christ. He is their counsellor in trouble and their leader in devotion. He should recognise that the hustings and the debating-hall are places from which he can now conscientiously withdraw. Up to this time he may have felt that his public duty to Christ's cause called upon him to teach the ethics which were ignored or undiscerned. But now that the question is in the political arena, he can allow the Church court, if need be, and the Christian man, of necessity, to carry forward the movement to its victory. He can rest assured that the cause he has at heart will not suffer from his abstinence. Nor will the teaching on the Lord's day, carefully pruned of all political references, have any less effect in directing the public mind, and bringing about the political reform, because he lays, what men recognise to be, a self-denying ordinance upon his speech.

One closing remark may be added to deal with the allegation that the Church is losing its influence with the working classes, because it is not standing forth as the champion of their wrongs. It is declared that the masses have ceased to consider the Church, because it is callous to their injustices and subservient to the capitalist. This broad

charge is not accurate, at least in many quarters. That can be proved by the fact that the Church could not exist at all unless it had the support of the people generally. It may be true that in large cities, and in London especially, there is a saddening neglect of public worship. But in all these cases it will be found that the neglect is more marked among the rich than among the poor. It cannot be, therefore, owing to the neglect of the poor. But it is not accurate, as a matter of positive fact. Anyone who has knowledge of the Churches of England, or Scotland, or Ireland, or Wales, must be aware of many congregations, some of them with large memberships, which are composed entirely of those who earn their daily bread in the sweat of their face. There is more apathy and indifference among the rich than among the poor, and the causes in both cases the same. They are the withering of faith in the unseen, the want of conviction that God is and is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, the strange ignorance of what the Church can be to the thought and the worship of the people, and there is the consequent indifference to its public services and its special mission. Part of this is due to the fact that the ministers of the Church have not kept the mission of the Church clearly enough in their own minds, and have not served the people by a costly and notable self-sacrifice. It has been rather because men have

neglected the Gospel message, than because they have left the questions of work and wages on one side, that the poor are less kindly to the Church than they ought to be. The Churches which are full of the poor are not those ministered to by men who are eager to "serve tables," by discussing the rate of wages, and the rent of a house, but by men who have given themselves to "the ministry of the word of God and of prayer." The Church has offended the working classes, not by her devotion to the Gospel of the life and cross of Christ. She has offended them, too often, by her social exclusiveness, her forms of service which tend to become too stately and too ceremonial for simple people, her refusal to speak the language of plain men, and her failure to visit the people in their homes.

But, if it be true that some men are alien and hostile, because the Church will not take up their demands for greater material well-being, and for larger wages and ampler leisure, nothing can be done. The demand that the Church should do so, is only the modern cry of the men who were willing to make Christ their king if he would multiply their bread. To them Christ said, meeting their demand with the one word the Church should utter, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth." There were some who went back from Him. He let them go. They were never heard of. Christ built

His kingdom without them. The unethical God destroys. The unspiritual God blots out of the book which he has written. That is to say, He makes no use of them in carrying out his purpose of bringing in the Kingdom.

CHAPTER XII

THE UNCONSIDERED HORIZON

THE contestants in a cause are frequently so absorbed in their struggle as to be heedless and unaware of some of the forces and events which are bearing down upon them. That was marked by the Master Interpreter when He declared of those who experienced the first great social catastrophe, "They knew not until the flood came and took them all away." The fall of every empire, the passing away of every ancient civilisation, and the change of every social order have been the happening of the unexpected. Babylon surprised by the Medes and Persians ; Rome, when her virile energy had been sapped by the corrupting service of her slaves, and the enfeebling infusion of their blood, overwhelmed by the more ethical Barbarians of the north ; the social order of Europe renewed and transformed by the Reformation ; the revolution of the industrial system in the last century—all of these are instances of the undescried future. Jesus warned the men of his time, facing unconsciously the most revolutionising change the world has known, when He said that they did not discern the signs of the

times. They were living with an unconsidered horizon.

Are we not in danger of this absorption in our problems to the exclusion of any thought about a coming change in their form and in their significance? Wealth and poverty, capital and labour, the tenure and use of the land, the claim for women and denial of it, absorb the interest and energy of both politicians and people until our public life has become an arena of struggle. We hear social reformers urging their panaceas for the evils of our time as though the present form and order was eternal. We see men formulating theories and advocating methods without any thought as to what may be coming on the earth. There is a strange persistence in the conception that the industrial system and the relationships it involves, are going to continue or to submit to an imposed evolution. The world has become so interesting and the problems of its human relationships so engrossing, its advance hitherto has been so continuous that men are quick to believe that all things will continue as they have been, and we are all unwilling to consider any changes which may disturb our peace or mock our petty schemes. We need to consider the horizon.

Now, it is not easy, and it is not prudent to be too confident about what can be seen upon the horizon. It is certainly impossible to play the part

of prophet, except in the larger declaration that only the ethical shall survive, and only the spiritual shall conquer. Yet it is each man's duty to look out to the horizon and to set down, as simply and honestly as he can, the possible changes and developments which seem inevitable, apart from the schemes and policies of men.

I

Our eyes are first met, as we lift them to the future, to the *attainment of a universal and stimulating education by the community*. All observers agree that a fundamental cause of our present social unrest has been the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. But this fruit is about to be more largely cultivated and more generously bestowed. The education of the masses is one of the imminent advances of our social and political life. All educationalists have been busy discussing its problems, outlining its ideals, and suggesting the modes and means of a higher attainment. Our statesmen are pondering not only more comprehensive, but more detailed and more efficient systems of national education. Every nation has become persuaded that the battle is not to the strong, and the race is not to the swift, by nature, but the battle is to the drilled, and the race is to the trained and disciplined. As a consequence modern ideals of education are not content with the simple

rudiments of a former era. They aim at the development of the powers of the body and of the mind, the quickening of the senses, the refining of the tastes, the training of the aptitudes. But realise the effect of this universal higher education upon the habits and ambitions, and upon the work of the people. Conceive the youth of a time close at hand, who is familiar with the thoughts and the language of Shakespeare, can understand the gay worldliness and the *debonair* grace of Horace, is able to recall and sum up the results of the past history of his own race, and to look out on the world with an understanding of its strategic geographical positions, is not only deft in the use of tools put into his hands in the public schools but is quick and sensitive to things beautiful. What kind of life will such a youth demand? What kind of work will he aspire to do? What inevitable tasks and toils will be endeavour to escape? If any man declares that this more highly educated populace will bend its back to the work of the scavenger and the toil of the stevedore, except under the influence of a religious sanction, he seems to be speaking without warrant. This next generation, with their more qualitated tastes and more artistic appreciation, will change our social problems and alter the questions we have to answer.

Certain obvious results will follow. The laborious and the dirty work of the work of the world

will be refused. The more menial tasks will be despised. No toil will be accepted which does not give a large amount of personal independence and self-pleasing liberty. That result has become evident in the difficulty of securing domestic servants. There are kindly and seemingly wise women who declare that many people are the worse for their education, and that domestic service was better, and those employed in it were happier, when they could do no more than sign their names. It is equally evident in the importation of the Poles to work in the pits of Scotland, and of the Italians and Chinese to make the railway cuttings of America. It can be seen also in the craving for, "the soft job" among young men. Something which does not strain the muscles, and does not sweat the brow, and does not offend the sensitised nerves, is in eager demand. But is not all this the issue of a higher education?

The impending change will have other and only slightly less immediate results. One of them is the keener competition for the more advantageous posts, the more commanding services, and the more privileged positions. The evidences of this are already in our hands. Never were there so many training colleges, and technical schools, and coaching establishments. They are all crowded to the door. The man who has a repute for enabling young men and women to pass the inevitable

examination, can fill up every hour of the twenty four with eager pupils. The "crammer" has become an institution. One is tempted to think that the way is made narrow and the gate strait which leads to these positions, not to test the sufficiently qualified, but to reduce the too large numbers who might pass in.

A secondary effect will be the lessening of the wages of those who fill these positions of ease and honour and privileges. Brains and skill will always command a supremacy. But there are thousands of posts, and they are likely to increase in number, which require only a sufficient education and some special discipline. But the issue of the keener competition will be that the larger supply will lower the price of this kind of labour, and the ease and cleanliness and privilege, will be reckoned as part of the reward. That result can be seen already in the salaries paid to bank clerks, whose secure position and honourable and yet easy work have filled the ranks of candidates to overflowing, until only the meagre salary which is offered keeps down the long list of aspirants.

What that will mean in the labour market is fairly easy to descry. The wages of the labourer, whether in the kitchen or in the quarry, or at the quay, must rise. The demand for a larger reward will become more insistent, and it cannot be denied.

II

When we look in another direction we discern another and entirely different impending change. That is *the increase of scientific knowledge and the consequently greater mastery over the resources of nature and the methods of their use*. We seldom fully realise the vast changes which have already taken place in our industrial order and our social life, owing to the advancement of scientific learning and its application to the work of the world. Any one who will look back for a generation and recall the tasks of labour, the means of transit, the methods of business, and the modes of life in the home, will receive a sense of amazement at the difference between then and now. The discovery of new energies, the employment of neglected forces, the economy of our common resources formerly expended with profligacy, the utilisation of waste products, the invention of machinery, the adaptation of the wealth of the world so as to supply food and clothing and shelter more cheaply and more adequately—all these have altered life and affected its problems. The explorer, the chemist, the engineer, the electrician, the economist, not to speak of their less conspicuous, but as important, fellow-workers, are more eager and more hopeful than before. We may yet be able to supply every want by the touch of a button, as we flash on our

light to-day, and to do much of the work of the world by a whisper which liberates a force.

It is almost impossible for the most daring imagination to visualise the effects of such an advance in the scientific progress of method. It may have a large place in counteracting some of the results of a higher and refining education. Not only will it place more abundant food and less costly shelter, and many of the luxuries of life, within the reach of all. But it will directly affect the labour-market by reducing the toilsome and straining and dirty manual labour of the world. We need never hope that the disagreeable will be altogether avoided, or that toil and exhaustion will cease in life, so long as man has to cope with the forces of nature, and with his own imperious and ever hungrier wants. But it may well be that no man shall be required to go down into a coal pit, or to lift anything heavier in a quarry than his hammer, or to strain at the sheets of a ship in a gale. The heavy work of the world will be laid less on the backs of straining men and women, and more on the iron shoulders of their machines. We need not think that personal service can ever be dispensed with. Yet we may look forward to the scavenging of a city and the disposal of its *debris* being conducted by a few hands working adapted machineries, and to a whole series of manufactures being carried out with no more

strain than that of an engineer watching his engine, or a girl tending a perfected loom.

This result may seem to be a cause for the happiest optimism. Yet it must be remembered that it will tend to take interest out of life, so far as work can give it. It will lower the status of the labourer, who will become merely a tender of a machine. It will dispense with the use of training and will no longer call for skill. The issue of that will be a lessened wage, and the only remedy for the lessened wage will be the increase of the wealth of the world, and the acquirement of a simple content with the hours of a lighter, but more monotonous labour.

III

When we look out in another direction we are given pause. Not only do we seem to see more distinctly, but what we do see creates a greater anxiety. Here we regard *the exhaustion of the resources of nature, and the lessening of the geographical advantage of the older industrial centres*. We may consider that there are three chief sources of the supremacy of Europe in the world's commerce. These three are very notable in the past achievements of British industry. I am personally inclined to set down the economic system of Free Trade as a fourth, and I am inclined to say that if the United States of America continues

its lowering of the tariffs, its people will successfully compete in those manufactures where hitherto they have been outclassed. But this opinion will not be valid with all, and in any case Free Trade is not a natural, but a statutory, advantage. The three vital sources of supremacy are the possession of rich mineral deposits, the central geographical position of Europe, and especially of the British Isles, and the practical genius, the colonising aptitudes, and the untiring energy of the peoples of Europe. The skies of Northern Europe are not always kind, and its seas are seldom calm. Its lands are often stony, and its climate full of rigour. But these are the conditions which produce men, who neither fear nor falter in the face of difficulties.

But all of these three sources are in peril. Our coal deposits, on which we depend for our heat, and light, and force, are becoming exhausted. Expert opinion differs in the limits of life which is allowed to our coal-fields. But all experts agree that there is a limit, in the not distant future, when Europe will become bankrupt in coal. That may be retarded by the discovery of more economical ways of using our coal, and by the harnessing of other forces in the service of man. But it must be remarked that they will not give the older industrial centres any advantage over the rest of the world. What is still more to be feared is the

opening up of fresh coal-fields in Asia, or in Africa, in the midst of a teeming population which can supply cheap labour for their working. Already the British Isles have exhausted their deposits of iron ore, and are largely dependent upon Spain for their supply. It is only the cheapness of the coal which makes it profitable to import Spanish ore, and to smelt it in English and Scottish furnaces. If the square leagues of untouched coal-fields, which are said to exist in some parts of Asia, begin to be drawn upon, it is obvious that the advantage hitherto possessed by Europe will have passed away.

The second source of supremacy, central geographical position, is no longer the perquisite of Europe. The unoccupied regions of the world are filling up. The East is awakening. Its millions outnumber by many times those of Europe. The advantage given to the commerce of Europe, which streamed East and West, will be less and less, as these newer industrial centres develop and supply their own needs. Already the tide of emigration, especially of labour, from the older countries, is causing anxiety. Already our manufacturers have begun to feel the strain of competition in manufacture, not only because of the cheapness of labour but because of the accessibility of the markets. We need not think to be able to carry our products ten thousand miles and compete

with manufacturers who live next door to the customer. A glance at the map will show that whereas the British Isles were once the centre of the civilised world, they are rapidly being removed towards its outer circle.

Can we hope that the practical genius and daring energy of our people is to continue as a sure asset of our commercial prosperity? When we read the census returns of our declining birthrate, when we note the lower average height of the men who enlist in the army, when we mark the mean physique of our city-bred population, when we consider the unwillingness of our young men to endure the drill required in our Territorial army, when we see how eager men are to watch games, but how unwilling to play them, when we think of the enfeebling curse of our national sin of drunkenness, we may well wonder if confidence in what is called "British pluck" and assurance of British energy are well placed. These are popular words on the platform, but do the facts support them?

Here we reach an outlook which might well cause even labour leaders to stop, and to think out the meaning of their demands. The burden of what I have been saying in the preceding chapters is that the settlement of our unrest must be an ethical settlement. But there is an ethics of economics, as well as of human action. If our resources of nature are exhausted, and if our

geographical advantage is taken away, whether our people decline in physical stamina and moral strength or not, the whole labour problem will be altered. Questions of wealth and poverty will pass beyond all attempts at equal distribution of the one, and compassionate, wise-minded relief of the other. We have no guarantee that the questions we debate to-day, and the demands made by Socialists, or even by the Labour Party, will be counted worth considering in a generation. We can be certain that the questions will take very different forms, and the solutions suggested to-day be regarded as valueless.

IV

What we descry, when we look in a fourth direction, may move us to deeper concern. That is *the entry into the world's labour-market of millions of hitherto uncompeting toilers*. If the black races of Africa are raised out of their sloth and quickened into ambition, as they have been in the United States, and if the yellow races of China and Manchuria and Japan, with their patient, skilful, easily remunerated, toil, enroll themselves as workers for the supply of the world's needs, all the present problems of our European industrial order will disappear. Karl Marx imagined that he was taking a wide survey when he asked his followers to think internationally. But he did

not think beyond the bounds of the industrial centres of Europe, and he did not look further than Christendom. We have been called of late years, under the influence of our knowledge of a larger realm, to think imperially. Much of our legislation is inspired by this larger thought. But we must now think not internationally, not imperially, but cosmically. In commerce and in labour neither nations nor empires can affect our problems. We must keep the world in view.

Already this "Black Peril" and this "Yellow Peril," as they have been called, have troubled other lands. The millions of African descent in the United States constitute an ever graver problem, not only for its government but for its labour. In South Africa the black peril makes the most thoughtful men still with apprehension. Already also in India and in East Africa the Asiatic worker has given alarm to his European fellow-citizens whom he outsells and sometimes outwits. Already also Japan has begun to compete in the world's markets with the old industrial centres. A printing-press, made by Japanese workmen, has been supplied to London at a less price than the English manufacturers can quote. Ships are being built in Yokohama with much cheaper labour, which are equal in equipment to those built upon the Clyde. We have been talking about the awakening of China, but it may be questioned if we are discerning

what that means. If China, with its docile, industrious, and skilful people, able to live in comfort on a good deal less than the minimum wage, begins to dig her coal, spin her cotton, manufacture her jute, build her ships, make her railway rolling stock, and become both a producer and a carrier, it is quite clear that the demands of labour as expressed by Mr Snowden, and Mr Ramsay Macdonald, and Mr Keir Hardie, not to speak of Mr Tom Mann and his postulates, will be voices on the empty air. Already capital, sensitive to commercial changes, is seeking employment in these larger fields. All that is needed to pass an unexpected sentence of death on much of our social unrest, is to let in the flood of Asiatic and African labour, not into our workshops and shipbuilding yards, but into their own.

The consideration of the horizon does not tend to a quiet mind. It may be that others may see more clearly and understand more deeply what is looming before their eyes. It may be that some may dismiss all that has been written as another example of the warnings of Cassandra. But while much may be rejected as unlikely, and proofs of inaccuracy may be led in some regards, so much seems certain as to call for thought and pause. It may not be true as some would have us believe that the 45,000,000 living in the British Isles shall shrink again into the 8,000,000 who can live on

the soil along with the addition of those descendants of British ancestors who may make the downs of England, and the green meadows of Ireland, and the glens of Scotland their summer homes. It may well be that the cities of the older world may still keep a lessened state as the clearing houses, and the bond-stores, and banking agencies, of an enlarged world. But whether such a decline is likely or not, and it has happened in other civilisations, there is enough, in the consideration of the horizon, to make all, who are dealing with social unrest, ask themselves whether their world-view and their time-view is large enough.

But whether these things be as true as they seem to the writer or not, great certainties remain. One of these is that the ethics of Jesus Christ remains, East or West, the one hope of the world. We cannot face our present conditions and resolve our present problems, and allay our social unrest, without a close dependence on the morality of Christ. We shall not meet any future whether it be of increased education and refinement, larger discovery and more skilfully adapted machinery, decreased national resources, or of the flood of the Eastern hordes of men, without that courage and hope, that purity of life and self-constraint, that vision of life here and life hereafter, which Christ alone can give. We can be sure, also, that the best ethic is the best economic,

and that not only honesty and enterprise, but truth and kindness and generosity between man and man, are the only secure basis of an industrial order, whether it be in years of prosperity or years of decline.

There is one application of this truth that it is brighter with hope than any other. If the competing hordes remain heathen in life, and pagan in the grossness of their customs, we may well become chill with despair. But if they can be brought into the kingdom of God, if righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost become the passion of their hearts as they may be of ours, and man to man the world over become one brotherhood in Christ, we need not fear any future we can descry. It should be realised, even by unbelieving men, that the world's enlargement and enrichment, in a true wealth and an enduring good, is dependent upon the Christian missionary. It ought to be quite clear already that the Christian missionary is the chief, if not the only uplifting and ennobling force, this country has sent into heathendom. Paul had a vision of a world where there should be, "Neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all." He discerned a time when neither race, nor ritual, nor rude heathen ignorance, nor social condition, should separate man from man. In the fulfilment

of that hope and prophecy, first among ourselves and then among the peoples of mankind, and not in the mere division of the things that perish with the using, lies the blessing of the future. Only as Christ, and all Christ stands for, is regnant in the social order, will social unrest cease, because its problems have been solved. Christ sets both the goal and the method in His decisive words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

261.8
C626c

3547

Clow

Christ in the social order

THE MASTER'S COLLEGE
POWELL LIBRARY
SANTA CLARITA, CA 91321

THE MASTER'S COLLEGE

261.8 C626c

MAIN

Clow, W. M./Christ in the social order



3 3540 00102 0490